COMMEMORATOR

Volume 5, Number 3 August 1995

The Nation Rallies to Save Mumia

Photo by Charles Slay

Political prisoner and award-winning journalist Mumia Abu Jamal's son, Jamal, speaks on his father's behalf at the Martin Luther King Jr. Junior High in Berkeley, June 25.

The movement demanding release of the renowned African-American political activist and writer Mumia Abu-Jamal, former Black Panther Party member convicted of the 1981 murder of a white police officer on the streets of Philadelphia has drawn wide national and international support since Pennsylvania Governor Thomas Ridge signed Abu-Jamal's death warrant, and set his execution date for August 17.

Instances of arrests and brutality have characterized the official response to protesters at rallies to save Mumia's life in San Francisco, California; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and elsewhere across the country. Mumia's own writings from his death row cell have resulted in a "disciplinary process" against him by Pennsylvania prison authorities for "engaging in the profession of journalism" as his execution date rapidly approaches.

Abu-Jamal has firmly maintained his innocence, but courts have, to date, turned a deaf ear to evidence of police tampering with witnesses, testimony of an unidentified gunman fleeing the scene, and charges of extreme prejudice on the part of the trial judge.

At a hearing in the Philadelphia Common Pleas Court on July 12, Judge Albert Sabo denied a defense motion to remove himself from deciding on the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, despite massive evidence brought by Abu-Jamal's attorneys of bias on Sabo's part. Judge Sabo is a "retired" member of the Fraternal Order of Police, which has been campaigning for Abu-Jamal's immediate execution.

In response to the motion for a stay of execution, the Philadelphia District Attorney's office filed and "answer" which proclaims that—the death penalty...is the highest exercise of the state's authority; and it should not lightly be disturbed." They go on to make the grotesque claim that "The carrying out of a valid death sentence cannot constitute irreparable injury for purposes of requesting a stay!"

Judge Sabo sought to require that the defense bring before him in a hearing on a stay of execution the witnesses who would testify on Abu-Jamal's behalf in a new trial. Abu-Jamal's attorneys described this as "utterly unprecedented."

Mumia's gun was found at the scene; it was a .38 calibre weapon, but the bullet that the medical examiner removed from Officer Faulkner was a .44 calibre bullet, and that's written in his records. And you cannot fire a .44 calibre bullet with a .38 calibre gun—that fact was never told to the jury!

Widely believed to have been charged and sentenced for his political beliefs and activities rather than for the crime charged, Mumia would be the first political prisoner formally executed by any government in the United States since Julius and Ethel

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Mass Transit Cuts:
Community Complaints Gain Focus

Photo by Reggie Johnson

As the federal government abandons mass transit, a $7 million cut in the Bay Area, California, AC transit system will cut 70-plus lines that run in the flatlands and will likely increase fares for bus riders.

In the face of federal and state tax cuts aimed at holding a narrow base of suburban voters, local community groups in urban centers throughout the country are mobilizing to protect mass treansportation service against further qualitative and quantitivative erosion.

In cities across the nation, the local governments' refrain is the same: we can't continue service at previous levels because of losses in federal and state subsidies due to tax cuts being offered to those who long ago removed themselves from the cities of the country.

Alameda Contra Costa Transit District in Oakland has announced that "because of state and federal cuts in transit susidies", they will be "forced" to cut 16% of bus service by the end of December, 1995. The cuts, are pre-

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Editorials

Acting Affirmatively For Real Change

If chattel slavery became known in its day as "the peculiar institution," "affirmative action" became one certainly no less peculiar, and in part an attempt to compromise to avoid no less than another revolution.

Its prehistory begins with the support the abolitionist movement gained from the northern industrialist. The industrialist found wage slavery more profitable than chattel slavery.

Abraham Lincoln, a former lawyer for the railroads, declared in 1863 that all slaves were free in those areas that were in a state of rebellion — where he had no power. The Emancipation Proclamation did not set any slaves free, but it meant that these slaves could no longer be pledged by plantation holders as property to borrow money against. The title was clouded. The property wasn't good collateral. In this way, the Confederacy's war effort was defunded. He did this while the issue of who was in charge of them was a matter of furious debate in the form of the Civil War.

The 14th Amendment followed the Civil War. It mandated that the previous slaves were now citizens, and prohibited the states from enforcing any law which abridged the privileges and immunities of any citizen (and in particular these new citizens), deprived them of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law, or denied them the equal protection of law. It also provided Congress with the power to enforce those provisions.

Not bad for people regarded by the Constitution as "three-fifths human." It was the First Article of the Constitution that acknowledged a slave, the property of other men, to count as three fifths of a person, for purpose of increasing slave states' representation in Congress, although of course only whites, and in most states only those whites who owned property, could vote.

These principles were soon set aside in favor of policies that allowed lynching, hanging, Jim Crow, and many other grass roots policies that guaranteed a continued subjugation of, not just Black, but all minorities. In fact, the Federal government made no other decisive (seemingly) steps to combat racism until World War II.

Another phenomenon developed, which continued a seed of the policies later institutionalized in affirmative action (as practiced if not in theory). In Chicago, in its slaughterhouses, when the Eastern European workers were drafted to fight in France in World War I, Blacks who rode the railroad from Mississippi to Chicago took their jobs. When World War I ended, the Blacks and Whites were forced to fight for jobs at the lower wages the Blacks were paid. For Blacks who retained their jobs, they had to pass through the White neighborhoods to get to work, and 1919 saw the worst race riots of the 20th century in Chicago. The "Stagger system" had been introduced into labor, where hiring a few minorities lowered all wages and increased profits as all the workers fought for spots in the new "integrated" arrangement.

Naturally it was difficult to justify fighting racism abroad, while it ran rampant at home.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) issued an executive order (Jan. 25, 1941) mandating that "Negroes be accepted into job training programs at defense plants." The order outlawed discrimination by employers holding defense contracts, and set up a Fair Employment Practices Commission.

While this program was set up ostensibly to give "equal" opportunity, it was set up as a "training program", which means the people hired into it would be given less than

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Opinions and positions taken in articles with bylines are those of their writers. The views expressed in the bylined editorial and opinion pieces published by The Commemorator *do not* necessarily *indicate its endorsement or support. —The Editor*

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COMMEMORATOR

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"SERVING ALL OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES"

Volume 5, Number 3, August 1995 Oakland, California

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SOUTHERN STATES CORRESPONDENT.....Earnest McBride

Affirmative action

by Bob Randolph

Affirmative action is an attempt
to correct some of the injustice
of shipping 20 million blacks
lying flat in their own vomit, shit and piss
on their way to the New World
in the 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.
Like maybe if Alameda County hires
6 black administrators
for the years 1995-1998,
maybe that's a tradeoff
for the 80,000 stolen from the Congo
from 1710 to 1810.
Or a few women get jobs they never
would have otherwise,
and that makes up for the young women
shipped across the Atlantic for 200 years
from the poverty stricken towns of Europe —
to be indentured brides
and to raise huge families
to help bring in the new crops,
and then are trashed
when they no longer are
bedroom and kitchen slaves.
Maybe special programs at the colleges
taught by 12 of the great
great grandchildren
of the 140,000 African tribespeople kidnapped from Ghana
and the 65,000 survivors finally sold in America
that weren't dumped overboard in the Atlantic
when British cutters fired across their bows
to board and inspect for contraband.
But after loads were dumped overboard
among the trailing sharks through the years,
they still made huge profits,
enough to set up Georgia and Alabama
and the Carolinas,
and Mississippi and so forth.
But then there was all the slave labor
in the fields
and parts of families sold off for 200 years
til the Civil War came along.
Then after that the slaves,
the 5 million of them or so we set free,
they had freedom!
to leave and starve
and stay illiterate and be homeless and get lynched.
And that's why a little affirmative action
that helps a few hundred blacks a little bit
to get some kind of education or jobs
or something
kind of helps balance the accounts
of all the hundreds of thousands of great granddaddies and great grandmas,
or the millions
who picked a nation's cotton for 150 years
at 25 cents credit per day's work at the plantation store.
So you see,
when you look back at the history of all this
you see affirmative action is only a drop in the bucket,
a tiny speck of moisture on the tongues
of black people
in this quietly insidiously still racist country.
And now they're trying to take even that away from us.
This drop in the bucket,
all in the face of the flow and flood of the American empire's global profits —
from countries on every continent working for 10 to 50 cents an hour.
Affirmative action—that drop in the bucket,
that drop in the bucket of our history —
the one that is filled with our blood,
filled with our love,
filled with our dreams.
And the women of our world,
used and used and used again,
without honor,
without love,
with such a tiny hint of cosmic truth in their lives.

July 4, 1995

OP-ED

The Plight of Black People in the U.S.

Photo by Evan Daniel

Dr. Small and patient at the Oakland, California Harriet Tubman Clinic.

(Editor's note: The following excerpts are from a speech given by Dr. Tolbert Small, Saturday, May 20, 1995 at Bates Hall in Oakland, at the Eleventh Annual Scholarship Dinner/Dance, sponsored by the Mississippi Valley State University National Alumni Association, Inc. Northern California Chapter.)

History and life is like a circle; if we do not learn from our mistakes, we will run around in a circle, repeating them again and again. To prepare for our future we must walk in the footsteps of our ancestors. All of us can trace our ancestors back to slavery. For over 400 years, we have waged a heroic struggle for survival in the United States. With emancipation, our forefathers were blessed with the slave debt of no bank account; we started with nothing.

Like most of our parents, my parents typify this struggle. In 1942, my parents left Mississippi, seeking a better way of life for their family. Uneducated because of Mississippi racism, my father went to school to the 6th grade; my mother to the 9th grade. Although my parents struggled most of their lives, they brought dignity into our family. They taught us the value of labor. They taught us that being poor does not necessitate a loss of manhood or of human dignity. They taught us that being poor is not a crime but to fail to develop your potential is a crime. In the spirit of both my parents and all of our parents, I would like to read this poem, written on my father's death.

Working Man

I am a working man.
I grew, chopped, and sampled your cotton.
I toiled the red clay of Mississippi.
I survived, though denied education and the right to vote.
I survived your lynchings.
I survived racism, a living relic of slavery.
I suffered indignities and injustice because of my color, but
I did not give up.
I kept my manhood.
I moved north to the promised land.
I built your trucks.
I ran your factories.
I scoured your floors.
I lived in your tenements.
I too am a working man.
At the age of Eighty-eight,
I embrace death with a kiss.
Death has ended my suffering.
To die is not a tragedy,
If one has lived and fought the good life.
In my last journey, I will not bow my head.
For I am a man.
I am an American.
I built this nation.

To my father, William Monroe Small August 13, 1903-April 18, 1992. As a people, we have a tradition of struggle, this we must never forget.

Our struggles did not begin in the 1960s; however, the post-bellum struggle for black justice appeared to peak in the 1960s. Organizations, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Southern Christian Leadership Council, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, the Congress of Racial Equality, and the Black Panther Party, lit a fire to stir the soul of this nation. It took courage for our people to struggle against racism, the law of the land in the deep south and the way of the land in the upper north. It takes courage to make difficult decisions, to sail against the wind.

It took courage for Rosa Parks to sit down. The political expedient thing for her to do would be to move to the back of the bus.

Fannie Lou Hamer was the youngest of 19 children; uneducated, she worked as a timekeeper on a cotton plantation in the Mississippi Delta. She lost her job when she attempted to register to vote. She became one of the most eloquent spokespersons and organizers for the movement in Mississippi. Thirty years ago, I drove her around the city of Detroit, fundraising from church to church.

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Youths Arrested in San Francisco Torchlight Protest

By Joe Bryak

About 800 demonstrators held a torchlit march in San Francisco on June 26 protesting the planned August legal lynching of Mumia Abu-Jamal. The marchers were predominantly youthful, and for some this protest of a legal murder was their first demonstration. The march left San Francisco's Civic Center area and progressed into the nearby Latino barrio. A few of the more undisciplined marchers set a trashbox afire directly in front of the district's police station, defying the well-prepared Tac Squad lined up in front of the station. Predictably, the police swung into action a few blocks later. They herded the demonstrators into an out-of-the-way side street, blocking escape, and clubbed dozens, including neighborhood onlookers. There was no legally required order to disperse. Special targets were those who were naive enough to hold up press passes or to admonish the police for their behavior. The cops clubbed reporters and the equipment they used to try to record this police riot. 279 were arrested in all.

It is not enough for us to condemn the police brutality, which is old news to us all, particularly movement "veterans." It is no surprise when a fish swims or a bird flies—nor, sadly, when a cop beats on somebody protesting the status quo. Protecting the status quo is the cop's job.

Of course we condemn this brutality, but we cannot be surprised at it. As emotional as we all are over the planned execution of one of us, one of the best of us, we must always try to plan our activities to best serve the cause—saving our brother's life. All else is secondary. When our actions merge on self-expression, we must correct our moves toward what is most effective. Figuring out the best course is not always easy. It means putting emotions under the control of the intellect, and that's a tough battle for us all. Mumia's life is at stake, and we

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This Is America (Believe It Or Not)

Black Owned Newspapers

By The Rev. Tom Sanders

Black-owned newspapers in the U.S. have always had a hard time, and still do. No multi-millionaire philanthropist or wealthy foundation has ever offered to help the *Commemorator* or any other independent Black newspaper, that I know of. This problem goes back a long way. In fact, when Frederick Douglass began publishing his antislavery weekly *North Star,* in Rochester, New York, in 1847, he did receive help from white abolitionists but, they, as broad minded as they were, thought it presumptuous of him to be lecturing in print on principles of liberty. They told him, "Let us have the facts. We'll take care of the philosophy." Douglass had this same problem with three other newspapers that he published.

Earlier black-owned newspapers had similar problems. Their demands made them vulnerable to swift extinction. None of the black abolitionist newspapers, the first of which appeared in 1827, was in existence after the Civil War.

You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.
—John 8:32

After Reconstruction, black newspapers evolved from being a propaganda press into an opposition against current public insanity press, because often the friends of former slaves were

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Letters to the Editor

Lester Hamilton

Hello Commemorator:

This is Mr. Hamilton! I'm writing to say that I did receive the newspaper, and I would like to say Thank You so very much. Hopefully, it's the beginning of something positive happening for the Hamilton family. I used to write different places seeking help to no avail, and that's why I lost focus and gave up. But now that I know there are people out there who care about what's happening to the poor folks, I sincerely thank God for the *Commemorator* and I'm sure in a few years the *Commemorator* will grow to be a powerful Black newspaper. I hope I will be free so I can be a part of something so positive.

My plan now is to write some people and send a copy of the newspaper and hope that someone will get in touch with the *Commemorator* offering assistance; I am here praying.

I know you guys have taken the first step for me, but I just need to know one question? How would I get people's addresses like Bill Cosby, Dick Gregory, etc., etc.?

Oh yeah, I do hope everyone at the *Commemorator* is fine and in good health, again thanks, will be in touch.

A modest & humble friend
Lester & Family
Vacaville, CA

Critique of "Panther"

Dear Commemorator,

I was very interested in Shannon Rucker's review of the movie "Panther," as produced and directed by Van Peebles & Son. I saw the movie on a Thursday evening in Jackson, Mississippi. And I came away very favorably impressed. Indeed, "Panther" is the best movie I've seen since moving back to Mississippi in 1982.

Having been a part of the student movement and civil rights activism in L.A. and San Francisco during the highlights from 1965-1970, I found the movie almost an exact chronicle of the impressions and disillusionments that prevailed at that time. Unlike Ms. Rucker, I did not perceive any elements of "Terminator 2" in the movie, particularly since the reality of gunfire and police violence were palpable and incessant. And then guys like Bunchey Carter, and John Huggins, Fred Hampton and untold others never got up and walked away after the cameras stopped rolling, as our two-dimensional hero Arnold Schwarzenegger continues to do.

At the time of the events pictured in the movies, I had behind me the experience of a cold-war Veteran and a victim of the anti-civil rights repression here in the South including Southern California. I had come back to the United States from a two-year sojourn in Europe and the Middle-East in 1964 with the expectation of doing whatever was necessary to break the racist stranglehold the rednecks and reactionaries held on all the people and institutions of this country. Thanks to the Civil Rights militant groups, the black student unions, the Black Panthers, the post-Malcolm X generation, I felt that I had been justified in coming back to the USA rather than moving to Africa or the Middle East. Of course, I felt a lot of pain and grief for the younger activists who were being set up and blown away by COINTELPRO and police operatives everywhere.

In viewing the movie "Panther," I had the hindsight of a brief stint of working at Universal Studios in the early 1970s. I was a television production publicist, and that put me right at the middle of the theory and practice of American cinematic propaganda. Hence, I was very keen on the production values and the structure of visual communications as created and passed down to us from such immortals as Sergei Eisentein, Abel Gance, and W.D. Griffith, among others.

Do any of the old Panthers have any idea of the hurt and embarrassment many of us veterans and Third-World ideologues felt when Huey embraced Israel over the Palestin ians? Do they still fail to understand the importance of self-criticism and the notion of "praxis," that is practice informed by reason? If so, then let them get back on solid theoretical ground by dispensing forever with the notion of the lumpenproletariat being a revolutionary class, as Huey decided and maintained to the end, his death coming at the hands of a member of that outcast class.

But nobody saw the movie here. The local theater never screened it.

Here in my hometown of Vicksburg, the very young boys and girls are picking up on the sick gang-banging images coming out of South Central LA and New York. Young Damian "Football" Williams is a freaky hero for some of the local kids, his having learned his "revolutionary" social ideology from BET and the rap groups before he moved from here in 1989. Hundreds, if not thousands, of the local kids—black, white, and otherwise—are into drug-dealing, "pimp-slapping bitches," jamming old men and women (i.e. robbing and burglarizing, even murdering elderly people). All that shit is happening here, in a dinky little town of 25,000 people. Fortunately, the Panther movie pointed its finger toward something better, something with more substance. For that, I'm grateful. But nobody saw the movie here. The local theater never screened it.

Nevertheless, I would like to pass along my best wishes to Melvin and Mario Van Peebles. From the time of "Watermelon man" and "Sweet-back..." up to "New Jack City," I always associated the Van Peebles name with shabby, piss-poor cinematic excrement. "Panther" did indeed change my mind about them. I hope they will get even more serious and technically competent in their future work.

Yours truly,
Earnest McBride
Vicksburg, MI

Active in the struggle since '66

Salutations Mrs. Hall,

Hopefully this unexpected letter finds you and yours in the very best of health, both mentally and physically, and that you and your staff are continuing to reach out to the brothers and sisters that have yet been informed. As for myself, I'm as well as anyone could possibly expect, while having to endure these asinine conditions.

My reason for having to write this letter is because I feel that I was blessed to have read your circulation for the very first time, this morning. I must say that I was very impressed to say the least.

I feel that you and your staff should know that I've been an active member of the struggle since 1966. I was in "A" quad (C.M.C.) with Huey P Newton and brother James Carr, in 1969. I would greatly appreciate it if you could please find it within your heart to place me on your subscription list!! At this present time, I'm regretful to inform you that I'm indigent.

In closing, I wish to thank you and your staff for any consideration you may render in this matter!

Respectfully,
Bro. B.J. Johnson
San Quentin, CA

A call from the "SHU" Pelican Bay

To Whom It May Concern:

I am an incarcerated brother in the Pelican Bay Security Housing Unit ["The SHU—-ed.]. I was blessed by a fellow brethren to read the *Commemorator.* I really got a lot out of it. Especially on the issue of nationalism and internationalism. It was good to hear about our brother Dhoruba [formerly Richard Moore, Black Panther Party member, part of the "New York 21," recently released from almost 20 years of incarceration.] It is always good to hear about the hand of oppression being lifted off the people. Now, what I need to know is if you send the *Commemorator* to the people in this Dungeon. It is hard enough to receive information to keep us in forward momentum in struggle. From what I've read in the newspaper, the people are in dire need of your assistance. If so please put me on your mailing list. Asante sana ingi.

Jah's Guidance & Protection
Peace! In Struggle
Kevin Wilson
Cresent City, CA

The decline and fall of journalism

Dear Editor,

I find it very disheartening to read columns in newspapers, such as Adam Hochschild's, "The decline and fall of the Black Panthers," especially in one of the major Bay Area dailies. It makes me question the quality of local journalism, and the overall intelligence of both the journalists and their readership. Take for instance this piece, "The decline and fall of the Black Panthers," which appeared in the Sunday edition of the Examiner — on May 28, 1995.

Beginning with his first three paragraphs, we can find several examples of this purely subjective, sensationalistic, and uninformed brand of journalism. In the opening paragraph, we understand right away what the true intent of the piece is. Adam Hochschild writes, "Everybody seems to be reconsidering the 1960s."

Who is the everybody of which he speaks? Well for starters it's Robert McNamara, former Secretary of Defense during the Nixon administration, and then of course it's Mario and Melvin Van Peebles, makers of the movie, "Panther." So, what do the former Secretary of Defense, and the Black Panther Party have to do with one another? They represent movements that Hochschild was both suspicious and fearful of. You see, Adam Hochschild was a reactionary left-wing liberal who probably neither understood, nor cared to understand, the true inner workings and ideologies of these two vastly different organizations.

In the second paragraph, Hochschild toots his own horn by stating, "I was in the anti-war movement. I was also a civil-rights worker in Mississippi. I'm proud on both accounts." Proud of what? Proud of not recognizing the true nature of both of these much written about movements. To have been part of these movements was not in itself a noble accomplishment. There is a level of understanding and political thought that must accompany such endeavors. Judging by this piece, Adam Hochschild possessed neither of the two.

The anti-war movement, in retrospect, was a divisive and reactionary movement that served only to blur the real issues, and replaced them with short sighted, empty rhetoric. On the other hand, the civil-rights work, done in the southern United States, served a very important purpose. This movement illustrated to the rest of the country just how the establishment plays the race and class cards. Poor whites vs. poor blacks, poor whites vs. middle class whites, and middle class blacks vs. poor blacks, etc. This was obviously a non-productive trap, and once again, in retrospect, it created more factions than solidarity. The first

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NEW WAR AGAINST POVERTY

This section brings the oppressed communities and concerned people visual news of their struggles for liberation nationally and internationally—to highlight the class war and to tie together the many fronts of struggle (past and present) and to build intercommunal solidarity for real progressive change.

This photo collage and captions, like the regular articles we run, highlights struggles from many fronts: The fight for comprehensive health care for all; the fight for jobs with decent wages; the fight for housing and education for all; where we are winning and where we are losing the **New War Against Poverty**—against oppression.

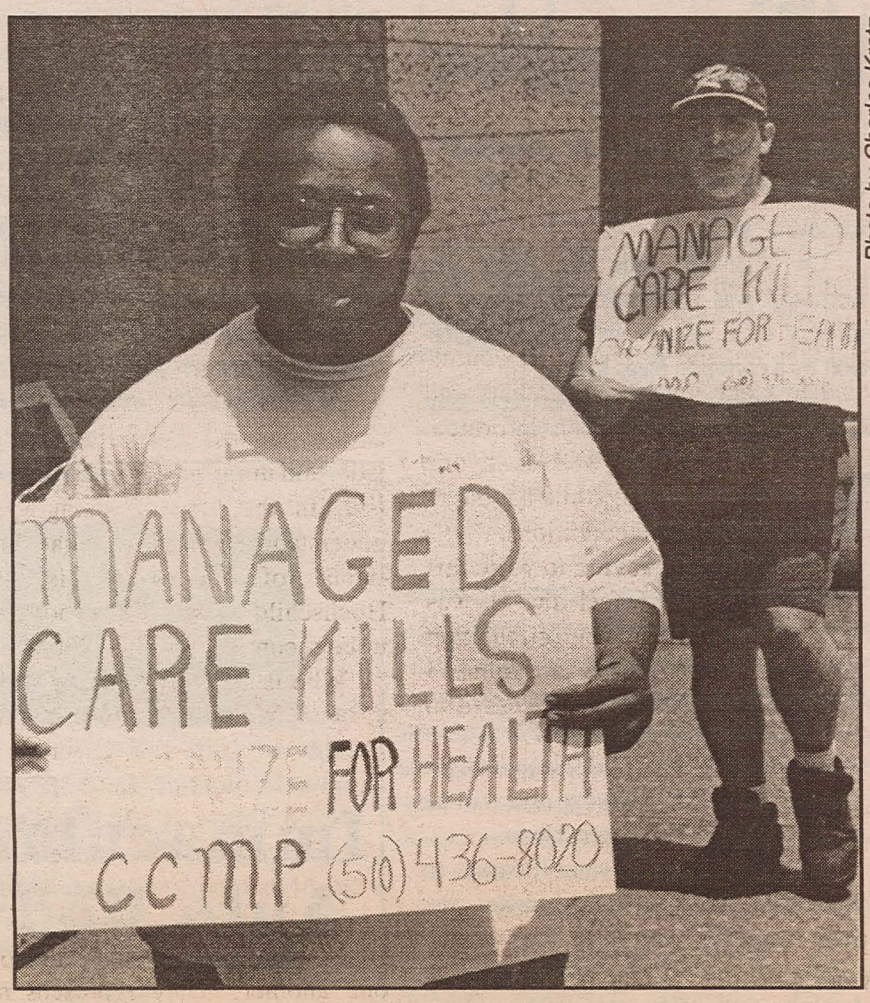

Photo by Charles Kratz

Without any vote by the people, promised on any universal health care plan, health care in the United States is being surrendered to profitable "Health Maintenance Organizations" (HMOs). In California, Blue Cross (newly privatized) is in line for a contract to run medical care for Medi-Cal patients in Alameda county. Under a state "managed care" system, this will take funding away from county run services and set up the county health services to go bankrupt. The county's plan will compete with private corporate health plans, all run on the principle of cutting labor costs and limiting services.

Photo by Charles Kratz

The Black Panther Party 10-Point Program demanded as its 6th point, "WE WANT COMPLETELY FREE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL BLACK AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE. We believe that the government must provide, free of charge, for the people, health facilities that will not only treat our illnesses, most of which have come about because of our oppression, but will also develop preventative medical programs to guarantee our future survival. We believe that mass health education and research programs must be developed to give all Black and oppressed people access to advance scientific and medical information, so we may provide ourselves with proper medical attention and care." Managed care programs across the United States are the response of a government that is determined to deny us this demand forever.

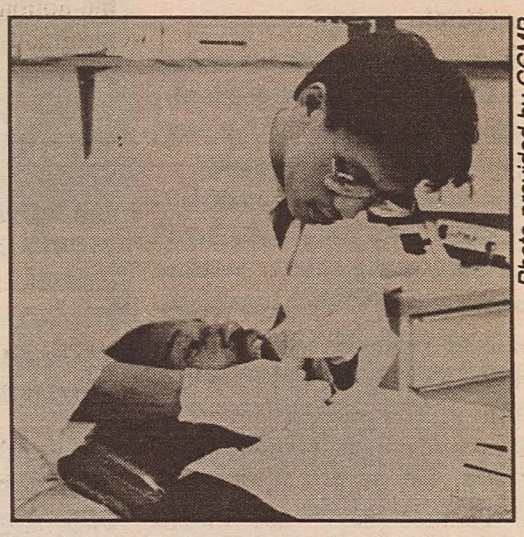

Photo provided by CCMP

Doctors treating poor and working people are being told by "managed care plans" not to even tell their patients about treatments the plan won't pay for. Instead doctors are paid more if they don't provide needed care, and docked pay if they give too much care. Low-income people who have to rely on Medi-Cal or county health care have nowhere else to turn when care is denied. Low income communities and medical professionals have united to stop this fascist policy, commonly known as "death squad medicine."

Coalition of Concerned Medical Professionals (CCMP) has been fighting for comprehensive health care for low income communities for 18 years in California, Oregon, New York, and other states. CCMP's free-of-charge medical benefit program involves volunteer doctors and many others who believe health care is a right and not a privilege afforded only by a few, and are pledged to fight for comprehensive health care for all, regardless of ability to pay. Local CCMP organizations are leading fights against death squad medicine in many communities, including the informational picket line shown here.

The Commemorator would like to thank the following Bay Area businesses that are participating in the New War Against Poverty through a 10% discount to low-income customers who have signed-up with Western Service Workers Association.

A.O.C. Video, 1500 E. 14th Street
Oakland, CA., (510) 534-2270

Basket Case Antiques, 3400 66th Av. #3
Oakland, (510) 568-0902 *(ask for Herman)*

Dave Anderson (Dazzling Do's), 2270 E. 14th St.
Oakland, CA, (510) 536-8955

Discolandia Records & Tapes, 2636 E. 14th St.
Oakland, CA., (510) 261-1520

Earl's Beauty Supply, 3228 Adeline Street
Berkeley, CA., (510) 652-8041

Immaculate Auto Body, 1430 14th Street
Oakland CA., (510) 533-5742

KFC, 950 Market Street
Oakland, CA, (510) 763-3745

L.A. Appliances, 2631 Wallace Street
Oakland, CA, (510) 533-4559

Linus Printing, 1309 Franklin Street
Oakland, CA, (510) 268-9901

Los Cocos Restaurant, 1449 Fruitvale Avenue
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Law's Reverse

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

A city driver sees flashing lights bouncing off of her rear view mirror. Startled, she instinctively pulls over, stops, and awaits the traffic cop's instructions.

A hulking, high-booted traffic cop sidles over to the motorist, and tells her, "You know, that loud exhaust pipe of yours violates the Philadelphia Traffic Code, not to mention several emissions standards."

"I know it's loud, officer, but—um, it'll probably be a few weeks before our family can afford a repair job."

"Well, what's it worth to ya, not to go to jail tonight?" asked Highboots.

The driver, sweating profusely, heard one word: "Jail?"

The traffic cop's eyes are hidden under a mirrored reflector lens, but his slow sadistic smile tells it all.

"How much?"

Fear is mounted with reason, and she answers, "$250?"

"Not enough."

"$300?"

"Uh-uhn."

"$350?"

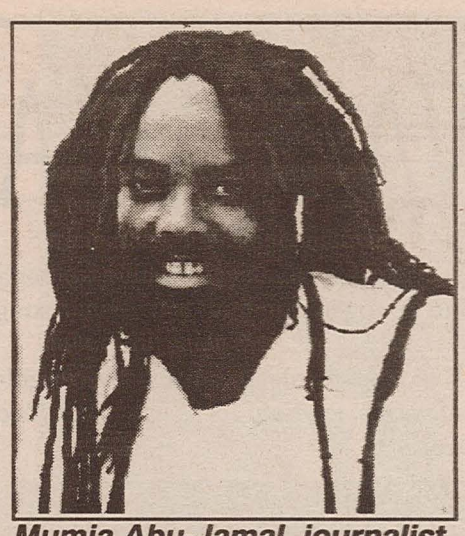
"Come on, lady–you'll hafta step out."

"$650! $650!"

"That'll do 'er, lady. You won! You won't go to jail tonight! Lemme have it."

Like a Price-is-Right- of-the-Macabre, this motorist, like many others, found the price of freedom in Philadelphia depended on how much money she could cough up to Philadelphia's "Finest" — the finest bunch of thieves ever to wear blue.

Minor violations became occasions where major rip-offs took place, proven in the case-in-point, Commonwealth v. Lomazoff, a Philadelphia traffic sergeant, who made G- money ripping off motorists



Mumia Abu-Jamal, journalist, whose column the Commemorator has printed since 1991.

for several years.

On Thursday, June 8th, 1995, Sgt. Lomazoff was convicted of 15 counts of robbery, theft, bribery, and official oppression by a common pleas jury.

His defense lawyer, former prosecutor Joseph J. McGill, told the jury the witnesses (in this case also the victims) were unreliable, adding it was "absurd" to believe a uniformed sergeant in a marked car would stop drivers to steal money.

(One wonders, if the cop were in plainclothes, and in an unmarked car, why would anyone stop? Talk about "absurd"!)

In counselor McGill's newest and most lucrative career as defender of corrupt and criminal cops, one also wonders if he now faces prosecutors who argue to juries, "Not to worry. If you find Mr. McGill's client guilty, he'll have the right to appeal, after appeal, after appeal; and what-the-hey; he might get a reversal."

One also wonders, when did prosecution witnesses suddenly become "unreliable," and "not credible?" Are they "credible" when you're a prosecutor, but "incredible" when you're a defense counsel? And what if the witnesses are also the victims?

In this system, it ain't about "justice," it's about a business, profit, and money.

All the "justice" you can afford.

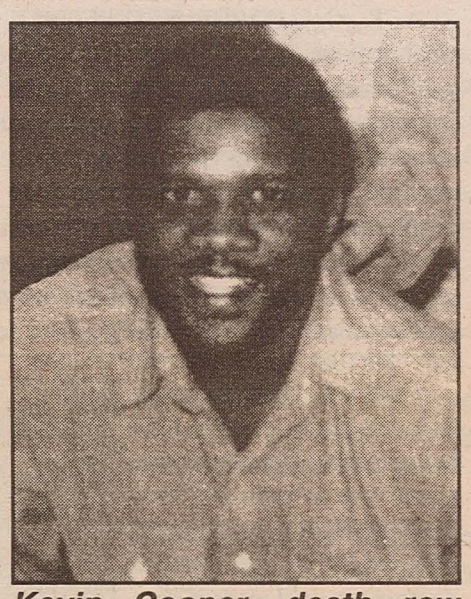
The Truth

by Kevin Cooper

I, Kevin Cooper, a 37-year-old African American, am writing this article from Death Row at San Quentin Prison. The reason I am writing this article is because I am very concerned and disappointed with the lack of involvement by Black people, as a whole, in this fight to end the death penalty! In the 10 plus years that I have been here in San Quentin, on Death Row, I have noticed the lack of participation by minorities, especially by brothers and sisters, in this very real fight to end the death penalty!

In this country called America, I want to know why my people aren't more involved? We African Americans are only 12% of the population, yet we make up almost half of the death row population! And nowhere do I see a real movement, or involvement, by African Americans! I very seldom, if ever, see my brothers and sisters speaking out or getting involved to end this thing called the death penalty! Despite the fact that we as African Americans have been under this penalty since we arrived in this country! Have we forgotten this? Have we become so used to being killed by the system, by the powers that be, that we no longer care? That we turn a blind eye to what has been, and still is, our reality in this country?

This penalty is just as racist as California's Prop. 187, just as racist as the fight to end affirmative action, and just as racist as welfare reform, and all the other policies that the politicians have put together!! And to me, I think that it is a damn shame that the very



Kevin Cooper, death row inmate at San Quentin, calls for African-Americans to fight the racially and class biased death penalty.

people who have been, and are being, affected by these policies are the very same people who do nothing to end them! And while you do nothing, my brothers and sisters, your own people are being killed by the state and by the very same type of people who enslaved our ancestors!! This goes for my Latino brothers and sisters as well! And any other people, regardless of color, who stand by and do nothing while human beings are being legally murdered!

From the time I was arrested until now, I have for the most part dealt with only white people on both sides of this fight about the death penalty. For example, when I was arrested, I was given a white Public Defender. I was in front of a white judge. There were two white D.A.'s, and a damn near all white jury. On my appeal, I was given a white appeal attorney, then another, and now maybe two more. I have had only one Black person to work on my case, my investigator, and she is now leaving and will be replaced by a white investigator.

On the other side, when it comes to protesting or marching against the death penalty, I see very few, if any, people of color, especially African Americans, in there trying to put an end to this madness! It's like on one hand white people, who for the most part run this country, state, and prison and justice system, are trying to kill us — and are in fact killing us! And on the other hand white people are fighting hard as hell to save us — and they are doing a great job at it!

And in all this, I say "Where are my people?" "Where are my brothers and sisters?" Are we so divided that we can't come together to stop this legal killing? The same way we stopped legal lynching!? Or legal slavery!? Or legal segregation!? Or anything else that was "legal" in this country that tried to destroy our people!? Have we become so Americanized that we have

Continued on page 14

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International Update

Haiti: A Conversation with Pierre LaBossiere

(Editor's note: On June 25, 1995, elections took place in Haiti. These national elections involved 10,000 candidates and encompassed well over half the municipalities and counties of Haiti, excluding seven senators and the president, whose offices are up for re-election in December. These are the first elections to take place since the 1991 military coup and the 1995 return of President Aristide. "There were some incidents of intimidation, ballot burning, sabotage and polling booths opening late but the people came out to vote anyway," stated Pierre LaBossiere. "The Haitian people have come this far despite major setbacks; they're surely not going to give up now." A Haitian citizen waiting outside a polling booth was quoted as saying, "We've got a lot of patience, if it means patience for freedom. And today we are going to make sure that our freedom has arrived."

Haitians have a proud history of fighting and winning liberation beginning with the struggle against Napoleon Bonaparte in the early 19th century, under the leadership of Toussaint L'Ouverture, and later Jean-Jacques Dessalines.

None of Haiti's historical wins or advances toward a free and just society has been won through an election process. In fact, the most recent example of the impotence of elections as a principal means for permanent change in Haiti can be see shortly after the election of Father Bertrand Aristide. When the Haitian military, still very much in tact, ousted Aristide, their "democratically" elected leader, and replaced him with a military—appointed leader—General Raul Cedras.

Aristide was forced to flee the country and remained in exile in the USA for years before he was returned to his "democratically" elected post by threat of military force and held in that post by foreign military protection. (Not even the armed forces of his own nation!)

Photo by Brett Nickerson

Pierre LaBossiere Haitian American Bay Area resident, and Aristide supporter, discussed current political development in Haiti with Commemorator volunteer Michelle Uribe.

It is said that "Whatever it takes to get something, it will take the same thing to keep it." Historically Haitians have had to fight their way to free elections and it seems it is their destiny to fight to keep them.

Today, the elections are only the beginning toward Haiti's workers, peasants, and students gaining political and economic control from generations of brutal capitalist exploitation, headed by the United States and multinational corporations of the West, whose forces have already succeeded in raping and draining the majority of their land, labor and any other resource, with the aid of such Haitian nationalists (compradors) as "Papa" and "Baby" Doc Duvalier, who many Haitians hate with a passion. (The Duvalier autocracy ruled Haiti for decades in complicity with U.S. policy of military and economic intervention, which only perpetuated the cycle of poverty, oppression, repression, and massacres.)

It is our sincere hope that the leaders of the Haitian peoples' struggle for power are students of history and are not swayed in their choice of method of struggle by the appeal of those few elite and their minions currently holding hostage the peoples power.

Power to the People.

Talk with Pierre LaBossiere

COMMEMORATOR: The last time the *Commemorator* interviewed you, you were calling for no U.S. military intervention in Haiti. How is the U.S military presence in Haiti effecting the country, it seems to be the cornerstone of the Clinton policy?

LABOSSIERE: The presence of troops in Haiti is actually under an agreement by the international community with the Lavalas government, Aristide's party. (The Lavalas movement started in 1969. Lavalas is the people movement; it means flood—"every drop of rain has a common bond; when formed together it becomes a massive flood") This military thing is something that has been turned over to the UN. So we have presently about 2500 U.S. troops there or 3000, and another 3000 troops from different countries.

Had the international community—from the beginning of the coup—if they had stood with the people of Haiti there would be no need to have troops sent there. And this is the situation that I'd like to remind people about. Because what has happened there was a lack of will. I'm simply trying to be generous to the international 'misleaders.' There was clearly,

Continued on page 17

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ARCHIVES

Huey's Corner

Boston College Speech, 1970

*(**Editor's note:** The following speech was delivered by Dr. Huey P. Newton, founder and principal leader of the Black Panther Party, at Boston College 18 November, 1970. The speech, a brilliant elucidation on the party's theorectical positioning and its ideological transformations from black nationalism to Revolutionary Intercommunalism.*

The Commemorator presents this speech in two parts. Part one points out how the Black Panther Ten-Point Program was the framework for building practical programs as a method of grass-roots formation, from the bottom-up, within black and oppressed communities, from a class framework—Revolutionary Inter-communalism.

The concept Intercommunalism is based on the historical development of class struggle in the United States in the specific, and the world in the general. Revolutionary intercommunalism takes the concept of internationalism one step farther—pointing out that nations, as we think of them, no longer exists; for international corporate interests have long since broke down those boundaries in the pursuit of fat profits margins. This concept of Newton's Intercommunalism (revolutionary vs. reactionary) were long before General Agreement on Tariff and Taxes (GATT) and North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) were in on the front pages of the capitalist establishment media. It was far ahead of its time.)

"Power to the people, brothers and sisters. I would like to thank you for my presence here tonight because you are responsible for it. I would be in a maximum-security penitentiary if it were not for the power of the people.

I would like to petition you to do the same for Bobby Seale, our Chairman, for Ericka Huggins, for Angela Davis, for the New York 21 and the Soledad Brothers. For all political prisoners and prisoners of war. On the 28th and 29th of November we will have a People's Revolutionary Constitutional convention in Washington, D.C. We cannot have that convention if the people do not come. After all, the people are the makers of world history and responsible for everything. How can we have a convention if we have no people? Some believe a people's convention is possible without the people being there. As I recall, that was the case in 1777.

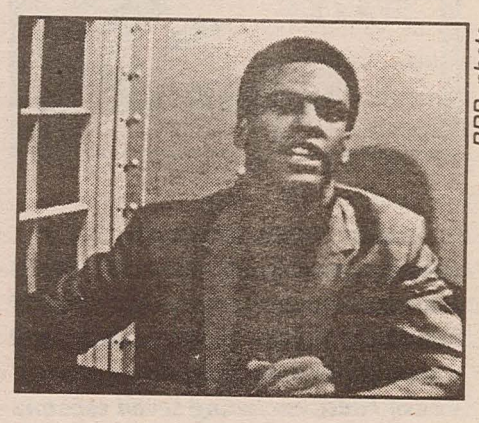
Tonight, I would like to outline for you the Black Panther Party's program and explain how we arrived at our ideological position and why we feel it necessary to institute a Ten-Point Program. A Ten-Point Program is not revolutionary in itself, nor is it reformist. It is a survival program. We, the people, are threatened with genocide because racism and fascism are rampant in this country and throughout the world. And the ruling circle in North America is responsible. We intend to change all of that, and in order to change it, there must be a total transformation. But until we can achieve that total transformation, we must exist. In order to exist, we must survive; therefore, we need a survival kit: the Ten-Point Program. It is necessary for our children to grow up healthy with functional and creative minds. They cannot do this if they do not get the correct nutrition. That is why we have a breakfast program for children. We also have community health programs. We have a busing program. We call it "The Bus for Relatives and Parents of Prisoners." We realize that the fascist regime that operates the prisons throughout America would like to do their treachery in the dark. But if we get the relatives, parents, and friends to the prisons they can expose the treachery of the fascists. This too is a survival program.

We must not regard our survival programs as an answer to the whole problem of oppression. We don't even claim it to be a revolutionary program. Revolutions are made of sterner stuff. We do say that if the people are not here revolution cannot be achieved, for the people and only the people make revolutions.

The theme of our Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention is "Survival Through Service to the People." At our convention we will present our total survival program. It is a program that works very much like the first-aid kit that is used when a plane falls and you find yourself in the middle of the sea on a rubber raft. You need a few things to last until you can get to the shore, until you can get to the shore, until you can get to that oasis where you can be happy and healthy. If you do not have the things necessary to get you to that shore, then you will probably not exist. At this time the ruling circle threatens us to the extent that we are afraid that we might not exist to see the next day or see the revolution. The Black Panther Party will not accept the total destruction of the people. As a matter of fact, we have drawn a line of demarcation and we will no longer tolerate fascism, aggression, brutality, and murder of any kind. We will not sit around and allow ourselves to be murdered. Each person has an obligation to preserve himself. If he does not preserve himself then I accuse him of suicide: reactionary suicide because reactionary conditions will have caused his death. If we do nothing we are accepting the situation and allowing ourselves to die

We will not accept that. If the alternatives are very narrow we still will not sit around, we will not die the death of the Jews in Germany. We would rather die the death of the Jews in Warsaw!

Where there is courage, where there is self-respect and dignity, there is a possibility that we can change the conditions and win. This is called revolutionary enthusiasm and it is the kind of struggle that is needed in order to guarantee a victory. If we must die, then we will die the death of a revolutionary suicide that says, "If I am put down, if I am driven out, I refuse to be swept out with a broom. I would much rather be driven out with a stick because if I am swept out with the broom it will humiliate me and I will lose my self-respect."



BPP photo

Dr. Huey P. Newton, Black Panther Party founder.

Continued in next issue

CC & Beyond ART GALLERY

Abdur Rashiyd Ibrahim Abdullah Muhammad
Curator

August, 1995
MEMO FROM: Abdur Rashiyd Abdullah Muhammad
SUBJECT: Art Buying and Selling

My name is Abdur Muhammad. I was incarcerated at the James River Correctional Center from 1990 to 1993. During my period of incarceration, I was privileged, through the will of Allah (God), to see firsthand the distinguished works of many talented artists.

Upon my release, my daughter and I founded CC & Beyond, an art gallery located in San Francisco, California which displays and sells art, including the works of male and female inmates from correctional facilities throughout the country. We purchase art directly and display art on consignment.

We specialize in watercolors, oil paintings and sketches which depict African-American themes. While our concentration is African-American themes, we are interested in other creative artwork.

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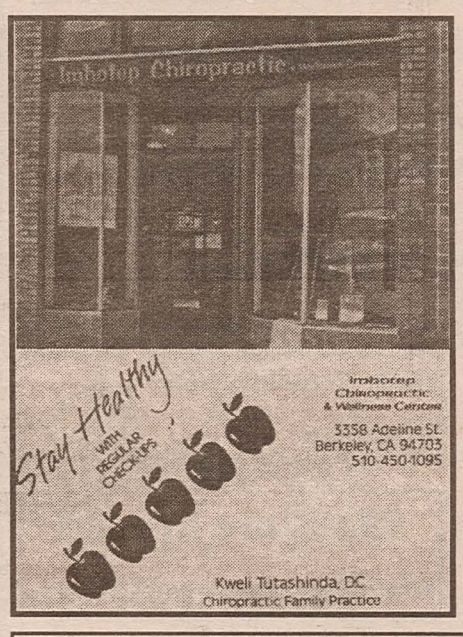

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Black newspapers in America

Continued from page 3

afraid of them. Even the great abolitionist Horace Greeley favored suffrage for blacks on a limited basis only.

Black journalists became leaders of their people by 1900 largely because they ran newspapers. Yet, those who were so famous in their day have largely been forgotten. Timothy Thomas Fortune, for example, born a slave in 1856, was the most famous black newspaperman of his day until a nervous breakdown in 1907 forced him to sell his New York paper, *The Age*. He died forgotten and in obscurity in 1928. William Monroe Trotter, born in 1872 and educated at Harvard, was the editor of the *Boston Guardian* from 1901 until his death, possibly by suicide, in 1934.

Ida B. Wells, born into slavery in 1862, was a school teacher when she wrote for a church newspaper in 1887. She became editor and part owner of a small paper in Memphis, *The Free Speech,* in 1889. In 1892 its offices were destroyed because of her reports on the lynching of three black Memphis businessmen by their white competitors. This led to her starting a nation-wide campaign against lynching and publishing two books about it, *Southern Horrors* (1892) and A *Red Record* (1895). She began to write her autobiography three years before her death in 1931, although it, *Crusade for Justice,* was published only in 1970 (see also the *Memphis Diary of Ida B. Wells,* edited by Miriam DeCosta-Willis (Beacon Press, 1995).

Another newspaper started during this period was *The Daily American,* published by James Weldon Johnson, the author of *"The Negro National Anthem"* and many other poems, in Jacksonville, Florida in 1896. However, the paper folded in only eight months because of lack of advertising and readership and Johnson told some black businessmen that the only sound investment he could think of was in a graveyard, because blacks had to die, had to be buried, and it had to be in segregated cemeteries.

Three thousand black newspapers have been started in the U.S., 1,876 were founded between 1880 and 1915, and only fifteen of those are alive today. Until blacks began to migrate to the North in large numbers in 1910 seventy percent of the black newspapers were located in the South.

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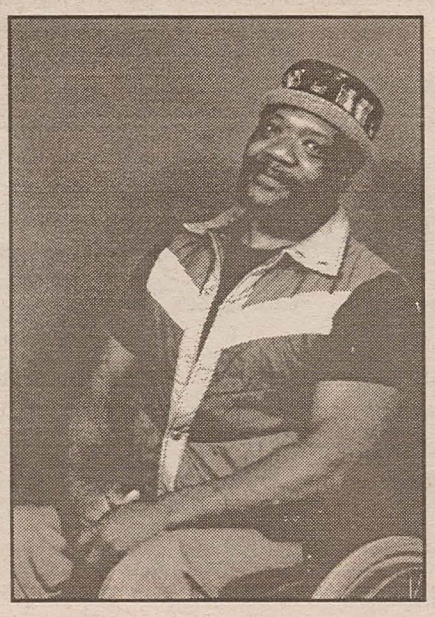
Artist Corner



Mr. Lee Williams

A gunshot left him paralyzed and unemployed, but Lee Williams refused to give up his art. He continues to paint, teach art classes, write songs, write poetry and fight for the rights of people with disabilities.

Poet, writer, singer, dancer, and band leader; multi-talented wheelchair-bound, Lee Williams has appeared on the big screen in the feature film "Made In America," featuring Whoopie Goldberg and Ted Danson. An extraordinary talent, he recently completed the principal role for an ADAPT commercial for the-handicapped produced by Hallway Productions. He has made numerous TV appearances and has worked around the world, including performances in Japan, Australia, and China. He has worked with Tina Turner, The Grateful Dead, Red Foxx, Sheila E., The Spinners, Hearts, Mary Wells, Gladys Knight, Lou Rawls, and many others.

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by Bob Randoph

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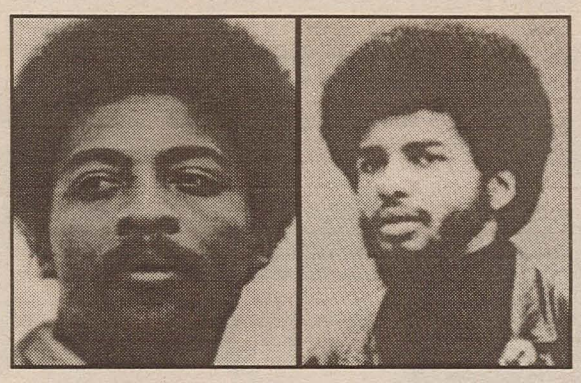

Alprentice "Bunchey" Carter, BPP leader assassinated, 1969.

John Huggins, BPP leader assassinated with Carter

I Remember "Bunchey"

by Earnest Mc Bride

I

Yes...
Yes. Yes!
I remember Bunchey,
I remember Bunchey well.
Me?
I`m just a plain and simple man
Who has brought a living flame,
Not dead flowers or empty prayer
To lay upon his mound.

You saw him shot
Within his class, fighting
At UCLA, you say?
Though I could not see him shot,
I was in and of and for his class, and
I stood by him, hard by him,
By him when he fell.

I was there one month,
Two months—or was it three?—before.
I smiled and softly cheered him when he sang
Another brother-poet`s song,
A dead man's eulogy:
"If we must die..." *

As sung by him
So locked my brain and chilled my blood,
So much I almost bled.
But then, the black man praised was dead.
And as I sat in mournful rapture,
This small-bottomed Black Beauty
Climbed black-skirted
Puffing on a Pall Mall
Up to the balcony church seat next to me.
"Let it not be like hogs."

Bunchey moaned on.

"Dude used to be my main man way back when at Jeff,"
Black Beauty sissed out in a string of
White-smoked sorrows
To anyone at her side.
"But who the brother talking, huh?"
She likewise asked of no one there.

"Like men we`ll face
"The murderous, cowardly pack."

And Bunchey backstepped, ready
To quit his stage:

"Pressed to the wall, dying,
"But fighting back."

Then Bunchey gently touched his
Comrade`s big black coffin box,
Holding fast onto a trace of memory,
Before I saw him sit him down.

II

The first time I saw Bunchey
He was doing nothing
Sort of
Standing aside to let the big boys have their day.
Fat Fool, Black Knight and Tigeroo
Promised the world a war,
A quick end to its racial crime
and hate of all its hate
And white-wrought pain.
And then they passed the plate.

Still Bunchey stood low in the wings.
Yes, I remember Bunchey;
Bunchey, I remember well.

That was a queer October, strange,
The way I see it now,
That first time in L.A.
Good or evil? Black Earth or putrid clay?
Who could tell?
And way back then,
It never mattered anyhow.

But Fat Fool and his friends were
Already primed,
Ready when their bosses were ready,
Waiting for some wartface's secret word,
Bent boys stooping, wanting to suck
Up on some luck worth no more than
A nickel, a dime, or a cheap greenbuck.
And panting, scheming, hissing a year—
More than a year, months and a year, lingering
Like a pitiful, poisoned, ugly serpent's egg—
Waiting for Judas's gold and cop-bought lead,
Plotting a shot-filled evil jubilee,
Killing, running, hiding lately,
Laying a poor man's poet's
Bleeding body down.

And John.
Who....Shot....John?

But you were there, you say?
Were you, that day in winter rain, at UCLA?
Then why can I, who had to fly
Back home to get the news,
Remember more and feel it more
Than all you big bad blustering dudes?
Bunchey, felled by
the devil man
And
His little gang of twisted legal catamites,
Could end this mess of forgetfulness,
if he simply wafted by to read a line,
You know, ghost-host,
At some poet's show,
One of these real cold days,
Maybe
One of these pitch black nights.
Yeah,
He'd shake these phoney mothers up.

III

Yes.
I remember Bunchey.
His life was not this hip-hop bop,
Nor was it always blues,
But somewhere in between.

So much was his life...himself...
Like Clifford Brown,
Dead, driving on night after night and on
From town to town,
Night and day, just feeling his way,
Both bop and blues and something more...
And Jeez...
Closed out too soon from his opening scene.

* * * *

There once was a king name Ikhnaton
Who killed all the old gods to make just one
And when that one god struck him dead,
The late gods all shat on his head.

* * * *

And Fat Fool still walks fat and free.
And Black Knight still leans upon
His never, ever unsheathed sword.
And Tigeroo now growls without a sign of tooth.
And I remember Bunchey, too.

So what the hell if you were there!
I tell you, Jake, I knew him even better.
So?
Sure, we've all seen bigger stones.
But you never saw a bigger man.

You remember.
I remember, yes, and so
I'll keep the best,
Forget the rest
And, remembering Bunchey's song,
When I die,
I will not lie,
I'll take some hogs along.

** "IF WE MUST DIE," by Claude McKay 1919)*

*(**Editor note:** In January of 1968, Alprentice "Bunchey" Carter formed the Southern California Chapter of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, the first BPP Chapter outside the Bay Area. January 17, 1969 Carter, 26, and John Jerome Huggins, 23, were murdered while leaving a student meeting on UCLA campus by members of the United Slaves (US) organization. Almost simultaneously, LAPD raided several BPP offices in the Los Angeles area. Two months previously, November 25, FBI memos detailed plans to promote violence between the BPP and the reactionary southern California-based US organization led by Ron Karenga, who was later exposed as cooperating with federal and local police agencies.)*

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I E F B A

ESTABLISHED 1991

IOTA EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

The **IOTA EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION, BAY AREA, INC (IEFBA)** is a tax-exempt, nonprofit organization, which was founded in 1991 by Brothers of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc. Located in Oakland, the organization assists disadvantaged youth in completing their eductional and caree goals by offering suypport services such as tutoring, counseling and scholarships. Additionally, the IEFBA helps the community through various philanthropic activities, such as fundraising. The primary goal of the IEFBA is to educte African-American youth and build the African-American community economically, politically and culturally.

The **IOTA PHI THETA FRATERNITY, INC.** is the fifth-largest, predominately African-American fraternal organization in the nation. Founded in 1963 at Morgan State University, Baltimore, MD, the Fraternity has grown to over 95 chapters, with a membership of over 10,000. **IOTA PHI THETA** is dedicated to the development and the perpetuation of Scholarship, Citizenship, Leadership, Fidelity, Professional Development, and especially, Brotherhood among African-American men and other men of Color. Locally, the Fraternity serves the community by offering scholarships and performing services for organizations such as the Oak Center Cultural Center, Mary Ann Wright Foundation, the Jubilee West Community Center (Oakland), NAACP and United Negro College Fund.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION on these two organizations, contact (510) 839-4327, or (800) 559-4403

Nation Rallies for Mumia

Continued from page 1

Rosenberg in 1953. It was Ethel Rosenberg who closed her final letter to her attorney, Emanuel Bloch, with the statement, "We are the first victims of American fascism."

The resonant voice of Kiilu Nyasha, a local Bay Area radio host, and former member of the Black Panther Party, predicted at a recent demonstration in front of the San Francisco federal building, where over 100 spirited people with picket signs marched and sang, then gathered to hear speakers address the issue.

"If we allow them to silence Mumia they'll be back for you and me tomorrow." Among the protesters were supporters, family members and friends of the late Aaron Williams, an African-American male, recently beaten and pepper-sprayed to death while unarmed by members of the San Francisco police department.

Demonstrations were held in San Francisco on June 9, in Oakland on June 5, to galvanize Bay Area efforts

Photo by Michelle Uribe

Kiilu Nyasha, former BPP member and broadcast journalist, speaks at the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal demonstration at San Francisco's federal building.

to save Abu-Jamal's life, who continues to speak out from death row on political, economic and social issues on class, race and justice.

Prior to becoming a professional journalist, as a youth and student activist, Abu-Jamal joined the Black Panthers, co-founded the Philadephia chapter, and became its Minister of Information at the age of 15. This occurred after he experienced, first-hand, police brutality meted out by the Philadephia police in 1968 for attending, in protest, a racist white supremacist rally, featuring George Wallace.

The African National Congress (ANC) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), a predominantly black union federation, are among the South African organizations which have made urgent appeals to save Abu-Jamal's life.

The Secretary General of the ANC, M.C. Ramaphosa, fired off a protest letter to Pennsylvania Governor Ridge on June 2; the same day Ridge signed Abu-Jamal's death warrant ordering his execution to take place on August 17.

Several key South African unions have joined the fight to save the life of America's only death row political prisoner. These include the South African Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU), the Food Farming Beverage and Allied Workers Union (FFBAWU), Turning Wheel Workers Union, the Steel Mining and Commercial Workers Union (STEMCWU), the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU), and the National Union of Metalworkers (NUMSA), which organizes the militant auto workers from Port Elizabeth and New London to Durban and Johannesburg.

Additional support of the movement to stop the execution of Abu-Jamal includes the French General Confederation of Labor (CGT); the Metro Toronto Labour Council and Vancouver Public Employees in Canada; Section 10 of the Mexican Teachers Union (SNTE); ILWU Locals 6 and 10 in San Francisco and ATU Local 308 in Chicago. Unions in Britain and Australia have also taken up Abu-Jamal's case.

"The fight to save Mumia's life is also a fight against Clinton's crime bill and the right wing (both Democratic and Republican politicians). It's the fight against police harassment and murder of black people and all oppressed people of color. It's a fight against poverty — the Contract with America, union busting, slave labor, the United States prison industry, and the poisoning of the environment by multinational corporations; his writings expose these contradictions and call for constructive action," stated Melvin Dickson, *Commemorator* Editor.

"His life is a reflection of those of us who will resist the slave conditions that keep us poor, divided and confused; it is about a common fight, and calls for a common strategy, for many coordinated tactics with one aim. The fight for power is a fight for control of the resources to determine the destiny of our oppressed communities. This is what Mumia wants. This is what the oppressed communities want. It is the only way we can really win. It is what Huey P. Newton and the Black Panther Party once taught us: the fight for dignity is a fight for power; the fight for power is an economic fight. That same fight for power and dignity is what Mumia is teaching us today, that's what his life symbolizes in our day-to-day struggle to fight to win."

South Africa has abolished the death penalty, yet the United States is advancing it, and is the only industrialized country that allows the death penalty. "They don't need workers anymore, prison labor will compete with your labor," stated Nyasha, who has been fasting on water and electrolyes since Governor Ridge signed Mumia's death warrant June 1 for execution in August.

Abu-Jamal is charged with the murder of Philadelphia Police Officer Daniel Faulkner. Faulkner was shot at approximately 3:52 a.m. on December 9, 1981 in downtown Philadelphia on Locust Street, near the intersection of 13th Street. He died approximately one hour later at Jefferson University Hospital as a result of the gunshot wound. Abu-Jamal was also found at the scene. He had been critically wounded by a

Continued on page 14

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Objective Review?

by Mumia Abu-Jamal

"The first casualty of War is Truth"—(saying).

In Law, one sometimes finds things are different from what they seem.

For example, in common knowledge it is supposed that eyewitness testimony is both reliable and conclusive.

Legal scholars (even the U.S. Supreme Court) have found that eyewitness testimony is one of the least reliable sources of truth, for what people "see" can be deeply influenced by what they want to see, or even what they expect to see.

I thought of that principle recently when I read a recent review in the *Washington Post*, which began thus:

"There is an image from Mumia Abu-Jamal's trial that stays with Maureen Faulkner, even now, 13 years later. Abu-Jamal was charged with killing Faulkner's husband, Daniel, a 25-year-old Philadelphia policeman....When the ballistics expert held up her husband's bloody blue shirt to display the bullet holes, Abu-Jamal, seated at the defense table, turned around and looked at Maureen Faulkner.

"'He smiled at me,' she says."

This, the opening paragraph in an article, is known in the newspaper biz as the "hook," a neat little trick writers use to grab the reader, inviting him/her to read further.

Almost unconsciously, I thought, as I read the "hook," "What a bastard," a split-second before realizing I was talking about myself.

It paints a chilling spectacle, guaranteed to shock, to "hook."

There's only one problem with it.

It never happened.

Now, the average reader will immediately expect bias — "of course, that's what you'd say."

If the reviewer, Megan Rosenfeld, had done a little research, she would've found that on the morning the shirt was shown to the jury, "Mumia Abu-Jamal" couldn't have done what was written, for I had been kicked out of the courtroom the day before (after unsuccessfully trying to cross-examine a witness) and wasn't allowed back in until some time after the shirt was exhibited.

In short, what the writer chillingly described, was impossible.

It never happened.

It is shameful that the FOP would misuse this poor woman for their own political ends, and further that the white mass-media, like the Post (both Wash. and N.Y.) would allow themselves to become FOP leaflets.

It is equally shameful that the media would utilize a "book review" (that doesn't review a book) to spread not facts, nor even opinions, but lies, to further the state's political agenda, the killing of the book's author.

The illusion, that journalists are "objective," is shattered in this instance, for the "journalists" have a very clear objective—the destruction of the book, Live from Death Row, and the legal lynching of the man who wrote it.

It is for this reason that you should read it, for, in a sense, it was written in my own blood.

This nation, which claims adherence to the "sacred" First Amendment, wants you to steer clear of this book, for, although it also claims its birth in "revolution," it knows, it senses, it sees, that Live from Death Row will usher in the Birth of new, true revolutionaries!

Letters to the Editor

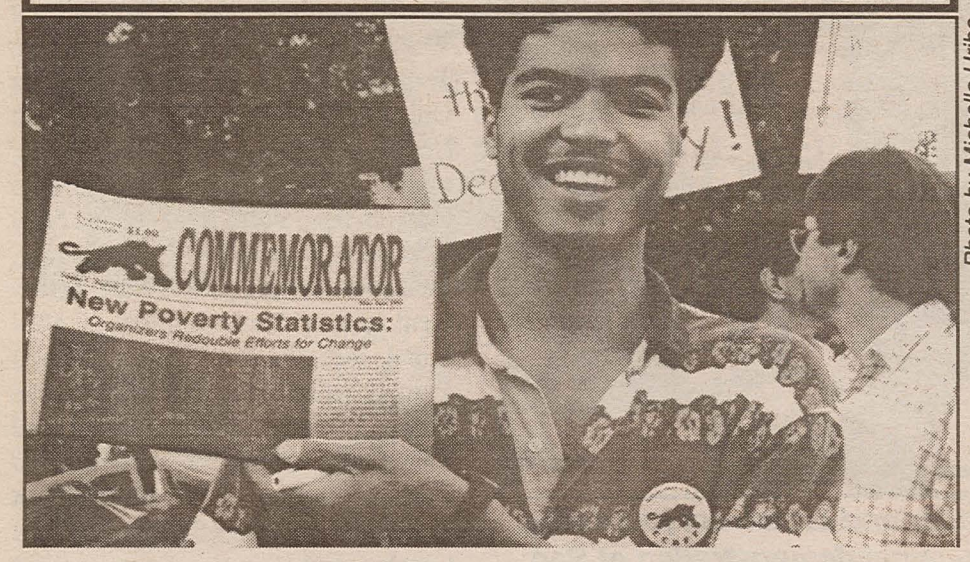

Photo by Michelle Uribe

Decline and fall of journalism

Continued from page 4

exception to this observation would probably be found among the middle aged, middle class white men and women who feel "proud" about their past participation in such events. The second exception would be the Black Panther Party.

In the third paragraph, and also the fourth, Hochschild criticizes the movie, "Panther," and all attempts to revive the Black Panther Party and its leader, Huey P. Newton. At one point he becomes self-conscious of his stance, and refers to the Panther's "noble rhetoric." This is a clear indication of his overall lack of knowledge when it comes to the Black Panther Party, and Huey P. Newton. Huey Newton, and for that matter, Elaine Brown and David Hilliard, who he also mentions in his piece, were harsh critics of rhetoric of any sort. Huey Newton and Elaine Brown were both very critical of Eldridge Cleaver for this reason. Huey Newton was not some opportunistic rhetoric monger (see Ron Karenga), he was a highly intelligent political thinker and theorist. One need only to reconsider his books *To Die for the People,* and *Revolutionary Suicide,* to get a taste of what he stood for and believed in. This is not to excuse the negative aspects of the Party and its leadership, but rather a way of being objective, and also a way of recognizing the validity of his method.

Today, when one speaks of Jeffersonian theory, and Marxian theory, one studies the methods of these men, not the men themselves. If we say that Marx was sexist and racist, this does not make his class analyses, or dialectical materialism invalid. Jefferson owned slaves, had a child with a slave, and never freed the mother of these children; yet we don't ignore his democratic theories. To dismiss either of these men's methods would be a denial of our own existence in the material world.

This is how the Huey P. Newtons and George Jacksons should and will be remembered, not for the sordid accounts of their lives that emanate from jealous and fearful men. The Hugh Pearsons, Adam Hochschilds, and David Horowitzes are only figments of the present and recent past. These men, these opportunistic propagandists for the establishment, are only important to themselves, not the people's struggle.

Adam Hochschild thinks Bob Moses should be the hero, and subject of a movie, not Huey P. Newton. Bob Moses is not the hero and subject of a movie because the people have decided different. "Power to the people," not "We shall overcome," is an idea for all time.

Yours truly,
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Real Change

Continued from page 2

market value for their labor. The Commission had come in with the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, along with the National Labor Relations Act of 1935, as a response to the general strikes of 1934 when the country was near revolution. As the result of these acts, the government set itself up as "mediator" between labor and employers and provided labor with scanty relief from repression. "Affirmative action" was yet to come. Roosevelt's army, for example, fought against the fascist governments of Germany, Italy, and Japan, ostensibly in part for their racism, but was itself thoroughly segregated. As late as 1952, when President Truman desgregated the U.S. Army, its top generals claimed it would destroy the army's discipline.

The affirmative action requirement was introduced in the Civil Rights legislation of the 1960's for remedying the lingering effects of past discrimination by requiring positive action by municipalities, states, the federal government, universities and colleges, private employers, banks and lending institutions. Often it takes the form of quotas in hiring — increasing the number of Black students in a college or workers in a business to reflect the numbers in the population — often with government loans and tax write-offs to sweeten the proposition.

The vagueness of affirmative action policies, more often than not, has benefited white workers and contractors. Occasionally blacks benefit but are stigmatized by the larger society for "free hand-outs," while the main impact of these policies is to pit worker against worker.

The whole phenomenon goes back to a turning-point in American history. In 1954, the new Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, Earl Warren, made a decision which overturned what had been settled law since 1896 in a case called Plessy v. Ferguson. The case that overturned it was called Brown v. Board of Education. It also took a new and unprecedented step by ordering the City of Little Rock to actually take specific, physical steps to change the condition. The condition was discrimination in its public schools. The decision in Plessy v. Ferguson had approved a doctrine known as "separate but equal." It accepted with a sense of abstract justice the reasoning which lay behind what came to be known as "Jim Crow" — segregation.

Slavery had been canceled by the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1866, but after Plessy it was not only done but accepted that blacks and whites could be at least kept apart. Of course, "separate but equal" quickly became an oxymoron, and, for the first time, the so-called Warren Court called a spade a shovel and said so.

It said that "separate" was hardly, if ever, "equal." The Court stated what everyone knew already, that if whites and blacks were kept separate and whites had traditionally, as a group, the benefits of the slave holding society — the money, the property, the positions, governmental authority, and opportunities for education, jobs and advancement, that the two could never be equal in any meaningful way. It not only rejected the rationale, however, but also ordered them to do something very specific about it. It ordered black children to be bussed to white schools, and vice versa, to desegregate them, in the ostensible, hope that if white children were forced to go to the formerly-black schools their parents would be forced to appropriate them the funds they needed to provide a decent education, and the few black students who benefited from the higher quality at the white schools would, perhaps, begin to break into the arenas previously denied them not only because of their race, but because of the poorer education.

So, the whites who could moved to the suburbs, or paid, where they could, for parochial schools, and no advance was achieved. The "civil rights" movement in the South called for equal rights, desegregation. But others demanded more — economic change — and the government passed the Voting Rights Act, the Open Housing Act, and job discrimination legislation. While a thousand African-Americans obtained elective office, the vast majority were as bad as off in 1994 as 1964. A few, first the "Deacons for Defense" founded by Robert S. Williams, forced into in exile in Cuba, and then the Black Panthers, refused to "ask" for laws, but instead took up the self-defense of their communities. Beginning with driving around with a bullhorn and advising black men of their rights when harassed by police, Huey Newton and the Panthers grew from self-defense.

In 1966 the Black Panther Party was founded, producing a coherent policy known as the Ten-Point Program that demanded fundamental change, the redistribution of the wealth and resources to benefit poor and black communities in the nation, calling for living wage jobs, and improvement in the quality and the availability of health and education.*

In 1970 the BPP demonstrated concrete examples of how the program they advocated actually worked, by instituting the "Survival Programs" (breakfast programs, free clinics, free shoes, immunization programs, etc.).

In a May 1, 1970 speech at Boston College (see page 8 this issue) BPP founder Huey P. Newton revealed the concept of intercommunalism as a means of understanding the forces at play between the various small circles of peoples and influence that make up the world, and also how a very

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Black Plight

Continued from page 3

When questioning the legal apartheid in the deep south, she would sing in her rich soprano voice, "I question America." We too must learn to question America.

I am a physician. In our country, the health care industry eats up 14% of our gross national product. Yet 18% of our population does not have health insurance; 80% of these uninsured are working people. Twenty-five percent of every dollar spent on health goes to the money managers, the insurance companies. The United States and South Africa are the only industrial countries with no national health care policy; ironically, South Africa may provide universal health care for its citizens before the United States does. It is no coincidence that South Africa and the United States both have a large non-white population. We must question America's commitment to provide quality health care to all of its citizens.

In Vietnam, we had affirmative action for the black soldiers; our people had the highest casualties relative to our population; yet we have the lowest percentage of university graduates relative to our population. Why should our Congressmen create more tax loop holes for corporations while they take away breakfast programs for our children. Among all the industrial countries, the gap between the rich and poor is greater in the United States than in any other industrial country.

> ***" Neither institution nor friends can make a race stand unless it has strength in its own foundation,... they must practice the virtues of self reliance, self-respect, industry, perseverance, and economy."***
>
> *—Paul Robeson*

In respect to affirmative action, can we trust the courts to make decisions based on justice and morality; No! History will teach us that the courts frequently represent the moral decay and racism of our times. Eighteen years after the Civil War, the Supreme Court voided the 1875 Civil Rights Act. "When a man has emerged from slavery and by the aid of beneficent legislation has shaken off the inseparable concomitants of that state, there must be some stage in the progress of his elevation when he takes the rank of a mere citizen and ceases to be the special favorite of the laws."

Who knows what the future holds for this black youth? But for sure: his race and class have always been on the bottom of the American pecking order—on all levels. Chances are he will always remain on the bottom as long as capitalism remains on top.

Obviously, we were such favorites of the law that no white murderers were ever convicted during a historical 100 years of lynchings. Shortly afterwards, our Supreme Court established Plessy v. Ferguson which legalized our country's Jim Crow segregation. Separate but unequal became the law of the land.

With the Bakke decision in 1978, the Supreme Court abolished quotas. The Supreme Court said that they would have decided against Bakke if the University of California had admitted to previous discrimination. It is very difficult for any university or society to condemn themselves.

If I personally know of several examples of racism in the University of California's medical admission policies, there must be many more. In 1959 Dr. VW was a B+ graduate of the University of California at Berkeley; he was denied admission to the University of California, San Francisco, because they had already admitted one black student. In 1970, Dr. M was denied admission to the University of California, San Francisco's orthopedic residency program; they had one black senior resident, their first black resident; Dr. M was told to reapply after their first black resident graduated.

Our universities have always practiced affirmative action for the wealthy and the privileged. The Dean of the University of California at Davis can admit five students strictly on his say so. In 1963, I saw a cheerleader with a C- average get into Marquette's medical school strictly on the basis of a letter from the University of Detroit's president. With a C- average, the wealthy Dan Quayle was admitted to Indiana Law School; they admitted him as an affirmative action minority student. Affirmative action has always existed and will always exist for the wealthy and the privileged.

Historically, the Black community has always had its house Negroes and its field Negroes. The house Negro cried when the evil master died. When they admitted Justice Clarence Thomas to Yale's Law School, his grades were so low that they had to lower the affirmative action standards to admit him. Justice Clarence Thomas opposes affirmative action. Through affirmative action, Ward Connerly, Governor Wilson's buddy on the University of California's board of regents, has made millions from government contracts. Ward Connerly plans to sue to end affirmative action.

Our future as a people will rest upon our own shoulders. We must learn from our history of 400 years of struggle, lest we repeat this struggle. In this capitalist society, until we can compete economically, we will never be able to compete. The playing field will never be level. We must strive for excellence in our individual lives, our families, and our communities. We must support the integrity of the family to end the drug problems plaguing all of our communities.

I would like to quote from Paul Robeson: "We realize that our future lies chiefly in our hands. We know that neither institution nor friends can make a race stand unless it has strength in its own foundation, that races like individuals must stand or fall by their own merit, that to fully succeed they must practice the virtues of self reliance, self-respect, industry, perseverance, and economy."

Youths Arrested

Continued from page 3

know this is not a game. But we must have a "game plan," a plan of our own that does not allow the enemy to call the shots and control the publicity. Our voice on the tightly controlled TV news briefly became a 3-second shot of somebody setting a fire, apparently for no reason, due to clever editing of images, while the other side is that of a seemingly "reasonable" appearing Mayor Frank Jordan, condemning "outsiders" for taking the side of a "cop killer." (Of course the older generation will remember other racist politicians in the Old South railing at civil rights demonstrators as "outside agitators!")

It is a seemingly impossible dilemma, getting our truth out on their lie box. But whatever we do, we must not play into the hands of our common enemy and allow our dedication to be trivialized with well-meaning actions that are not well enough thought out. None of this is to condemn that youthful, righteous outrage that is the motor that drives all movement for social change. Let us build the biggest, broadest, most effective movement

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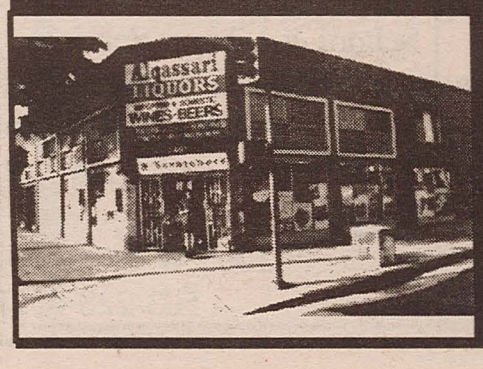

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- Manager

Nation rallies for Mumia

Continued from page 11

gunshot and was sitting in a pool of blood on the curb approximately four feet from where Faulkner had fallen.

Defense attorneys have shown that three eyewitnesses who claimed to identify Abu-Jamal as Faulkner's killer were coerced by the prosecution. The prosecution's main witness was a prostitute, Cynthia White, who admitted she had not even witnessed the events at issue and gave testimony in return for undisclosed police favors, according to the Petition for Post-Conviction Relief (Mumia Abu-Jamal a k a Wesley Cook, Petitioner). She had 38 previous arrests for prostitution in Philadelphia. The court did not disclose that White had been assigned police "protection" and continued to work the streets as a prostitute with plainclothes police guarding her.

No less than four witnesses to the shooting, situated in four different locations on Locust, including a key prosecution witness, reported seeing a person, identified by one of them as the gunman who shot Officer Faulkner, flee before the police arrived. All said he ran east on Locust on the south side of the street in the direction of Camac street, an alleyway that intersects the street and provides a ready escape route.

In all, two people to the west and behind the police car, one person to the east and in front of the police car, and one person north and high above the scene, all reported seeing someone flee down the south side of Locust after the shooting. No follow-up investigation of these claims was ever done. On the contrary, police coerced these witnesses to recant their testimony.

New evidence revealed that another witness was intimidated by the police so severely that he left Philadelphia prior to trial for fear of police harassment. This witness, William Singletary, reported that Mumia was not the shooter and that the true shooter was a third black male who fled the scene. He also stated that Cynthia White was not at the scene during the shooting, but arrived later. He was forced by police to sign a police statement that he did not see anything.

Photo by Michelle Uribe

Melvin Dickson, Commemorator editor and Kiilu Nyasha, local broadcast journalist, both-former BPP members.

As a radio commentator in Philadelphia in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Abu-Jamal became acclaimed in hosting a program called "Voice of the Voiceless." Today, as a writer, his syndicated columns and essays speak to cutting-edge issues, such as the increasing level of poverty in the United States and the world, the greed of capitalism and imperialism, the increasing level of prison labor, the criminal justice system, racism, political prisoners, the environment, and the Black Panther movement of the past, etc., and have been a regular feature of the Commemorator.

"If we allow the government to get away with the execution of Mumia it would be a dangerous precedent for all political prisoners, poor and working people whom he represents," stated Terry Cotton of Oakland, former political prisoner and Black Panther member. "Because of what Mumia stands for, freedom from racism and poverty, freedom from police harassment, freedom from slave labor, his voice has made a difference in shaping the movement of the 1990s. We must save Mumia's life, at the same time we must redouble our effort to fight for what he put his life on the line for."

According to the Introductory Statement from Abu-Jamal's Petition for Post-Conviction Relief, filed in the Criminal Divison of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania "Abu-Jamal was convicted of a crime he did not commit and sentenced to death based on his political views and history. His conviction was the product of widespread police and prosecutorial misconduct, advanced by a hostile and biased trial court which stripped him of his ability to raise a defense and then violated his fundamental rights to a fair and impartial trial.

Abu-Jamal's Petition For Post-Conviction Relief explained how police coerced witnesses to testify against him, rewarded those who did, concealed exculpatory evidence of his innocence, forced at least one exculpatory witness to give a false statement and leave the area for fear of police harassment. Not satisfied, prosecutors manufactured a false "confession" story months later as a result of Abu-Jamal filing a complaint against the police.

The police witness who could have rebutted that false claim went "on vacation" and was thus unavailable for trial. Testimony was adduced from prosecution experts who tailored their scientific tests to preclude the possibility of Abu-Jamal's innocence and offered speculation and hypothesis that, it turns out, was utterly false. None of this was rebutted at trial due to the court's refusal to provide Abu-Jamal minimal funds to launch an investigation and hire experts in firearms and pathology and due to the gross ineffectiveness of his stand-in counsel.

"The struggle to save Mumia's life has reached the critical stage. It all fit into their strategy—the institutionalization of legalized lynching and enslavement of the poor Black and working people who are with diminishing resources and without a voice. This is part of their final solution, their mopping up stage. Clinton has taken the low-road of outright war against Americans who still believe in a government by the people and for the people, not a government by the capitalist for the capitalist as Clinton believes. The execution of Mumia represents a new stage in the war those in charge wage every day against the poor and minorities, and if we are to stop it, we surely must organize, and organize now," said Dickson.

The Truth

Continued from page 6

forgotten who we are as a People and the fact that we are still in this country not because of America but in spite of America!? Because America for the most part has hurt us in ways that can never, ever be forgotten!

Do we hate each other so much that we don't feel that it's worth our time, or effort, or energy to get involved in this fight? Hell, are we still even "Brothers and Sisters!?" How can we be when the number one killer of Black men in this country is other Black men!? Those Black men who are killing other Black men aren't brothers, because brothers don't kill brothers, nor sisters, sisters! Nor do brothers and sisters stand by and do nothing while our own are being killed by a system that was built on killing! Especially us!! Even though I am on Death Row, I know in my heart that I am a brother, and as a brother, I am doing all that I can do under the present set of circumstances to help put an end to the death penalty! I am even writing this! But I must admit that this is a hard fight, and I do need your help.

And we both know that you can help, if only you want to! So why aren't you helping? It is not enough to straddle the fence these days! Either you are for something, or you are against it. And that's on this issue! If you are against something and do nothing, if you sit back and watch it happen even though you are against it, then you are just as guilty as those who take it upon themselves to play God and kill! People are dying, and by your lack of concern and actions, you are helping them to be killed! And all this is because you do nothing! I truly love people, especially mine, but I must admit that the love I have for my own is also accompanied by doubt. For the first time in my life I doubt my own people and their willingness to continue the fight our ancestors started!!

I have no doubt that some of us are doing more than our share, but for the most part, more of us are doing nothing, and to me that's a damn shame! Because we are talking about the saving of human life, or humanity, of human rights!! In humanity it is your duty as a fellow human being to not only get involved, but to take an active role in putting an end to the death penalty!

This country is now moving to the far right, and those people who are on the far right want so badly for things to go back to the way they were yesterday! And we all know that yesterday was a bad day for women, and for all people of color in this country. Especially Black people! And the only way to stop this backward trend, in this backward country, is to get up off your butt, and get involved! If in your heart you know that you are truly a "Real Brother or Sister," then I ask you to please get involved in this very real fight to end the death penalty, because my life, and the lives of other people, definitely depends on it. You

Continued on page 20

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Black newspapers in America

Continued from page 9

It was at the beginning of this period that Dr. W.E.B. DuBois founded the journal, *The Crisis,* as the official organ of the *NAAC,* which was in no danger of folding since it was backed by the organization and white suporters.

When McCarthyism began in the 1950s black newspapers were intimidated the same as other publications and had acquired national advertisers as well. Thus they became cautious and began to lose the readership of many of the young.

In order to avoid presenting an editorial line against the current political insanity on world or national news, black papers began to concentrate largely on local events, leading to a further loss in circulation. This left an open field for the last truly national black newspapers in the 1970s—*Muhammad Speaks* and *Black Panther*, both presenting black nationalist material somewhat like Marcus Garvey's *Negro World* in the 1920s.

Today there are somewhere between 200 and 250 black newspapers in the U.S. Only three of them are dailies, compared to about 1,750 white-owned dailies. When magazines are included, the total number of black journals increases to about 300, which shows the terrible need for the *Commemorator* today!

There have always been a few whites employed by black publications but no major city daily newspaper had a black editor until the late Robert C. Maynard bought the *Oakland Tribune* in 1982. Of course this led to an immediate decline in the white readership, a loss of advertising revenue, and eventually in a forced sale of the paper when Maynard developed cancer. The so-called liberal San Francisco Bay Area was not ready for a liberal black-owned daily.

The Kerner Commission's 1968 revelation of the way the major newspapers reported on black news led to a slight increase in the 175 black reporters employed by white dailies. Mr. Maynard was deeply involved in the training of black reporters during this period.

In 1978, black reporters made up four percent of reporters on white dailies. In 1993 the percentage leaped to 4.3, which is about the same figure for most other black professionals. Yet, only about 50 U.S. dailies have any black reporters at all today.

However, we must not fall victims to the thought that with more black news writers we will receive more truth. Newspapers are not in the business to dispense truths but, to make money for their owners. Propaganda is to democracy what violence is to totalitarian states. Indoctrination is a valuable mechanism for control since it effectively blocks understanding; and understanding, like compassion and intelligence, can be developed only by use. So, it's not the color of the reporter that makes the difference, but the reporter's realization that one of the roots of evil is ignorance and the willingness to expose whatever nostrum is currently being peddled by the quacks of advertising. Of course, this means that no writer seeking out all the truth he can about his subject and writing about will be able to keep his job with a commercial newspaper. Which is another reason for the importance of a paper like the *Commemorator*, which strives to be an antidote for falsehood in the daily press and TV.

Mark Twain on Reparations for Blacks

(From *The Wit and Wisdom of Mark Twain,* edited by Alex Ayres, A Meridian Book, New York, 1989, page 191).

"Samuel Clemens, although not a college graduate himself, paid for the college education of two gifted black men, one of whom graduated from Yale Law School and became a judge; the other graduated from a Southern seminary and became a minister. Clemens did not do this as a publicity stunt; in fact, he made no mention of it anywhere in his writings. It was not until 1985 that a Yale scholar unearthed documentary proof of Clemens's tuition payments and a letter to the dean of Yale explaining his motives. It was a partial payment of the reparation '*due from every white man to every black man*' for having perpetrated the crime of slavery."

Homes for the Poor

(From *Native Roots: How the Indians Enriched America,* Jack Weatherford, Fawcett Columbine, New York, 1992, pages 106-107).

"Mesa Verde did not serve as home to kings, popes, caliphs, khans, harems, monks, or knights. The common Anasazi people built their buildings for themselves and their children. The rooms of Mesa Verde housed their builders and their builders, children and grandchildren for centuries. The ruins are the remnants of homes built by and for the common people, built by a people without a rigid class structure. Nowhere else in the world of that time do we find such spectacular and well-built homes for the common people..

"For every castle and palace in the world, tens of thousands of laborers, slaves, prisoners, serfs, and common people lived in hovels that have long since disappeared, leaving very little archaeological trace. Millions labored in the fields to feed the thousands who served the civic, martial, and religious edifices of the powerful elite. Most of the great architectural wonders of the world, from the pyramids of ancient Egypt to the Great Wall of China, were built at the expense of poor people who had to live in huts and eat gruel in order that some great prince, emperor, shah, pope, or pharaoh might be protected or exalted by massive structures of monumental design.

"When the early European explorers and settlers saw the ruins of the Anasazi and the other Indians of the area, they gave them names such as Cliff Palace at Mesa Verde, Montezuma's Castle in Arizona, Cutthroat Castle in Utah, or Casas Grandes in northern Mexico. The whites saw the ruins through European eyes, attuned to the culture of a highly stratified society; therefore they assumed that anything so grand must have belonged to some type of aristocracy. It was inconceivable to the class-ridden Spaniards, and later to the Anglos, that common people could have built such residences for themselves."

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Ida B. Wells, publisher, editor, speaker, and chairman of the Anti-Lynching Bureau of the National Afro-American Council.

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Real change

Continued from page 12

small group of individuals (the wealthy elite) controls the vast majority of all the world's governments and resources and also how self-defense and self-sustenance of communities can form the beginning of a new way of dealing with racialism and nationalism..

It's a telling point that some of the most thorough enforcement of affirmative action was inspired by President Richard Nixon.(Of course it isn't too much of a surprise, Nixon was the first to open relations with communist China because he had perfect anti-communist credentials and couldn't be considered giving into the commies. He had to be as practical politician when it came to Blacks) During the early years of his administration, he assigned his Asst. Secretary of Labor, Art Fletcher (a Black appointee) to find a way to enforce the hiring provisions of Title VII in a way that would stand up to court challenge.

This is the catch: Fletcher was successful. In 1971 Nixon revealed the Philadelphia Plan. In Philadelphia, Federal contractors were required to meet specific numerical goals in hiring minorities, with the long-term goal equaling the percentage of that minority in the available labor force.

REVISED ORDER #4 (1971)

(An affirmative action program is a set of specifics and result-oriented procedures to which a contractor commits itself to apply every good-faith effort. An acceptable affirmative action program must include an analysis of areas within which the contractor is deficient in the utilization of minority groups and women, and further, goals and timetables to which the contractors' good-faith efforts must be directed to correct the deficiencies, and thus to achieve prompt and full utilization of minorities and women at all levels and in all segments of its work force where deficiencies exist. Goals, timetables, and affirmative action commitments must be designed to correct any identifiable deficiencies. Where deficiencies exist and where numbers of percentages are relevant in developing corrective action, the contractor shall establish and set forth specific goals for minorities and woman. Such goals and timetables, with supporting data and the analysis thereof shall be a part of the contractor written affirmative action program and shall be maintained at each establishment of the contractor. In the event it comes to the attention of the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs.)

Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCC) Revised Order No. 4 augmented the Johnson orders by requiring annual affirmative action plans from major contractors, and including hiring goals and timetables.

The result was that various agencies and contractors drew up plans based loosely around the idea of affirmative action, submit the plans for OFCC approval, and then implement the plan according to individual, rather than national agendas.

Invariably, administrations at various agencies and various levels of government attempted feeble efforts at social engineering. Equal rights and opportunities for blacks, Asians, Mexicans, gays, physically handicapped, mentally handicapped, etc. became in vogue.

A mishmash of incorrect policies upheld a system that perpetuates institutionalized racism, thereby changing little, and rarely, if ever, approaching the objectives for which they were created.

As Nicholas Lemann writing in the June 11, 1995 New York Times Magazine ("Taking Affirmative Action Apart"), explained well the thinking of the white officials who supported this kind of Affirmative Action, "Part of what was propelling affirmative action was that it had an interest group behind it, namely minority organizations. Much of their support of affirmative action is standard political behavior. Black people don't control America, though. All along, the overwhelmingly white Establishment has supported affirmative action and that is what accounts for its durability. The Establishment's reasoning, never openly stated, would have gone something like this: Sure, affirmative action generates white victims of reverse discrimination, but there aren't very many of them and they don't suffer too greatly. They go to Colgate instead of Cornell. Big deal. The most clearly outstanding whites—the people the meritocracy set up to spot and train for leadership—don't suffer at all. In return, we are able to take some of the edge off of what has been the most explosive issue in our history, the one that set off our bloodiest war and our worst civil disturbances. We create an integrated authority system. We give blacks a stake. It promotes the peace. In addition, case by case, it creates a feeling of doing something to correct our worst historic wrong."

Picking cotton in the South, unemployment/hustling in the North have been the common lot for the majority of black Americans. Historically, affirmative action was just a drop in the bucket.

Given choice between a seemingly well intention affirmative action program: which could do little better than perpetuate the slaughter house, stagger sytstem across the board, or forty acres and a mule, I strongly believe my great-great grandfather would have chosen the mule (and the forty acres). Today, most African-Americans still belong to a class that not only has no property, but no hope of owning any.

Faced with an atmosphere of extremely vocal, highly organized groups, such as the Black Panther Party, calling for immediate and fundamental change. Affirmative Action represented the government's reaction to the comprehensive, coherent plans for inclusion and redistribution called for by the vanguard for change, the BPP.

Although the preceding historical outline indicates that the government was involved in the affirmative action field before the creation of the BPP, events that took place after its inception show that the government found it quite necessary to respond to the considerable threat posed by both the 10 Point Program and the revolutionary concept of intercommunalism.

Affirmative Action tended to address the issues of disproportionate unemployment, racist hiring policies, and the exclusionary tactics that were commonly used by unions, government contractors, and large corporations to prevent black workers from making inroads into gainful employment.

The BPP, through its policy of grass roots organizing and education, began enlightening, not only the Black community, but oppressed communities of all sorts, that they were all victims of these exclusionary tactics, and that by, in a sense, pooling their fortunes, they could truly effect the kinds of fundamental changes called for by the 10 Point Program.

The 10 Point Program, by calling for full and gainful employment for all members of oppressed communities, was not regarded by the government as in its best interest. Nor was the idea of oppressed communities aligning their fortunes under a single, sensible banner, instead of competing for a limited share of government largess. The government responded to the challenge by initiating the aforementioned series of incomprehensible, incoherent policies collectively known as affirmative action.

Affirmative reaction would likely have been a more accurate title considering that the entire focus of this amalgamation of programs was to negate the appeal of the movement as put forth by the BPP.

The BPP called not only for full employment, accurate education, free health care, decent housing, etc., for the black community, it called for this for all oppressed communities.

Affirmative action, at best, was a superficial solution to a deeply ingrained institutionalized problem. While the concept of mandating the inclusion of minorities into the workplace prevailed. The Stagger System, attached to training wages disadvantaged all working people, and set them one against the other.

No other group in history has had as extensive a period of subjugation, discrimination, and ostracization as the black community in America. Despite that, the BPP knew that in order to affect any lasting change, all those oppressed communities would have to be addressed or there would be no lasting change.

The government, on the other hand, knew that unless the BPP and its call for fundamental change was

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Haiti

Continued from page 7

in many cases, collusion and collaboration on the part of many of those who call themselves leaders in the international community with the coup leaders or military in Haiti.

The coalition of nations that was put together to oppose the coup in Haiti was stronger than the one that opposed Hitler. Because you had all the countries in the world saying that they won't accept the coup in Haiti and giving lip service to Aristide and the legitimate Haitian government. But still everybody who claimed to oppose the coup were allowing shipments of weapons, oil to the Haitian military. The military, guys who have been killing people.

COMMEMORATOR: Could you name a concrete example?

LABOSSIERE: I'll give you examples before and after President Aristide was elected president of Haiti in 1990. In 1969 Nelson Rockefeller abolished unions, in favor of cheap labor and dangerous working conditions. In 1971 Nixon helped Baby Doc, who inherited the repressive oligarchy regime from his father Papa Doc, and encouraged U.S. corporations to move in. They (the wealthy compradors) called it economic boom, while everyone else was leaving or trying to leave. The U.S, financed the military to handle workers rebellions—workers de-manding wage increase, and better working conditions. But in 1985 and 86 the people's movement toppled Baby Doc, and yet the Macoute was perpetuating the Papa Doc system after Baby Doc left the country for France. And the people toppled every dictator generals; resistance did not stop after Baby Doc was given haven by the wealthy.

Toussaint L'Ouverture, Haitian military strategist who defeated Napolean Bonaparte's armies in the early nineteenth century and gained Haiti's independence from France.

A few years ago, I know of shipments of oil at the same time the Organization of American States decreed an embargo of oil against Haiti at a meeting in Colombia, if I remember right. A ship left Cartagena, Colombia and delivered oil in Haiti and nobody stopped it. And we had the Bahamas, which is part of the Organization of American States, also supplying oil to Haiti. We have the military traveling to the US, Haitian military leaders, leaders of the coup. We had Haitian soldiers receiving training at the School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Georgia at the time when the Bush administration was supposedly opposing the coup, de-nouncing the Haitian military!

So they were paying lip service. So all they had to do was to really demonstrate their will or just as Nancy Reagan says "just say NO" and mean NO. But it was nonsense, so that's why the talk in Haiti or people in Haiti refer to the coup as something that many leaders in the international community supported and actually pushed and made happen.

COMMEMORATOR: So on the one hand they're giving lip service against the coup...

LABOSSIERE: Exactly. That brings me to the point of the presence of the troops and also we could see in all the policies, for example; how can you be denouncing human rights abuses by the military...by those coup leaders, and yet instead of welcoming their victims or setting up decent places to receive the victims of the coup, you are arresting them on the high seas and putting them in handcuffs and taking them back to the very people who are killing and murdering them. See this was the U.S. refugee policy. So, what are you saying? You're saying something, you know, in words. But your deeds and actions are saying something else. But it was the solidarity of people, communities worldwide. Many brothers and sisters right here in the Bay Area took to the streets, throughout the US, Latin America, in Africa, Europe, the Caribbean, which really pushed this thing and pushed those leaders from the international community to actually follow the people's lead. They had to move and above all it was the resistance of the people in Haiti who refused to allow and to accept this coup. Because people were tired of being murdered, people refused to accept the coup and they kept fleeing, they kept resisting, using all the means at their disposal to resist the coup and this is what brought Aristide back.

So right now what is happening when the troops arrive in Haiti people were very happy to see them. I went to Haiti on Oct. 15 when Father Aristide returned and I went there and I saw how the people were responding to the troops. (Let's not forget too that many of those troops for example, my nephew was in the service although he didn't go to Haiti, but he is in the service in the US. That is my nephew, the brother is sharp, beautiful young brother with a good head on his soldiers and I know had he gone to Haiti he would have been on the side of the people, and this is what happened there.)

But when Carter went to Haiti—and I have to denounce Carter in some of the things he did—when he went there, he actually embraced Cedras [head of the military and coup leader] and reworked a whole new agreement by which the Haitians, the soldiers coming in from the multi-national force would be working hand in hand with the Haitian military. Giving them support in the Haitian military. And

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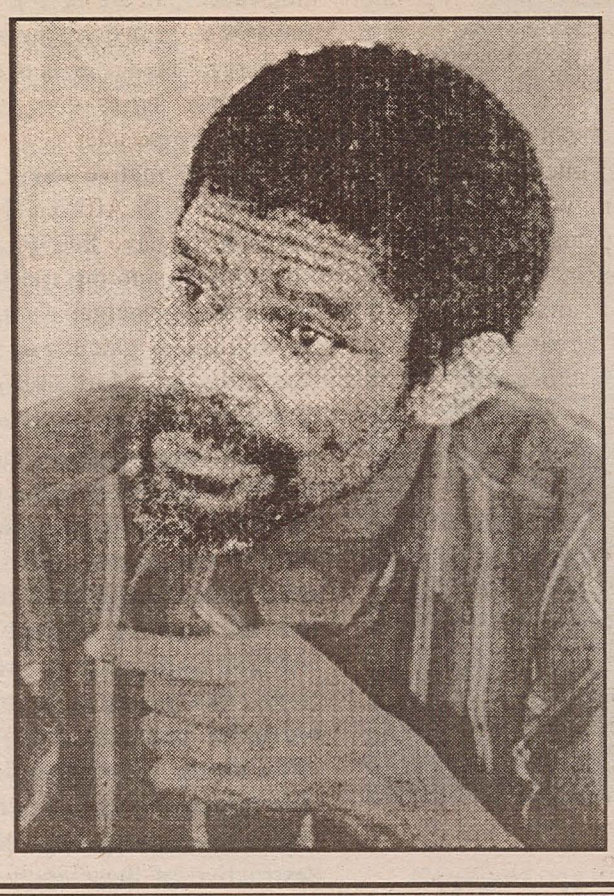
Even as the Commemorator goes to press, Haitian sources have informed the paper that Haitian president Aristide's Lavalas Party has won 75-80 % of the seats in Haiti's two-chamber Parliament.

Voters in Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, turned out the incumbent Mayor, Evans Paul, who had close ties to the U.S. embassy, electing popular activist and folksinger Manno Charlemagne. (photo to the right)



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CCBPP STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party (CCBPP) is committed to the goals of the Black Panther Party (BPP) as outlined in its Ten Point Program which was written in 1966 by the Black Panther Party founders, Dr. Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale.

The Ten Point Program outlined the goals and objectives toward changing conditions of economic exploitation and political oppression in all low-income and working communities of the U.S. and elsewhere, as the basis for unity and solidarity.

Also, the CCBPP is committed to the concept of Revolutionary Intercommunalism, introduced by Dr. Newton in 1970 at Boston College. Revolutionary Intercommunalism holds that there are basically two sides. On one side there is Reactionary Intercommunalism which presently holds the world's low-income and working communities under conditions of economic exploitation and political oppression by controlling the wealth, resources and institutions in order to maximize profits for the few. Huey identified this side as the leading reactionary side (that of the ruling class) which consists of a minority, fewer than five percent of the world population. Under these conditions, reactionary intercommunalism, by and large, keeps the poor and working communities on a cycle of degradation, under conditions of reaction, desperation and poverty, with no end in sight. Newton understood that in order to change these conditions and advance the economic and cultural interests of these oppressed communities of the world, disciplined organizations must be built from the bottom up, enabling these low-income and working communities to fight exploitation and oppression by any means necessary (this fight needs to start in the advanced industrialized U.S. because our nation leads the world in political reaction and economic exploitation).

CCBPP advances and upholds the goals which the BPP outlined in its Ten Point Program, and those goals are about ridding black ghettos and low-income and working communities of economic exploitation and political oppression, understanding that we can reach these goals only by seizing the time at the point of practice.

Black Panther Party 10-Point Program

WHAT WE WANT, WHAT WE BELIEVE

1. WE WANT FREEDOM. WE WANT POWER TO DETERMINE THE DESTINY OF OUR BLACK AND OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES. We believe that Black and oppressed people will not be free until we are able to determine our destinies in our own communities ourselves, by fully controlling all the institutions that exist in our communities.

2. WE WANT FULL EMPLOYMENT FOR OUR PEOPLE. We believe that the federal government is responsible and obligated to give every person employment or a guaranteed income. We believe that if the American businessmen will not give full employment, then the technology and means of production should be taken from the businessmen and placed in the community so that the people of the community can organize and employ all its people and give a high standard of living.

3. WE WANT AN END TO THE ROBBERY BY THE CAPITALIST OF OUR BLACK AND OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES. We believe that the racist government has robbed us and now we are demanding the overdue debt of forty acres and two mules. Forty acres and two mules were promised 100 years ago as restitution for slave labor and mass murder of Black people. We will accept the payment in currency that will be distributed to our many communities. The American racist has taken part in the slaughter of over fifty million Black people. Therefore, we feel this is a modest demand that we make.

4. WE WANT DECENT HOUSING, FIT FOR THE SHELTER OF HUMAN BEINGS. We believe that if the landlords will not give decent housing to our Black and oppressed communities, then housing and the land should be made into cooperatives so that the people in our communities, with government aid, can build and make decent housing for the people.

5. WE WANT EDUCATION FOR OUR PEOPLE THAT EXPOSES THE TRUE NATURE OF THIS DECADENT AMERICAN SOCIETY. WE WANT EDUCATION THAT TEACHES US OUR TRUE HISTORY AND OUR ROLE IN THE PRESENT-DAY SOCIETY. We believe in an educational system that will give to our people a knowledge of self. If you do not have knowledge of yourself and your position in the society and the world, then you will have little chance to know anything else.

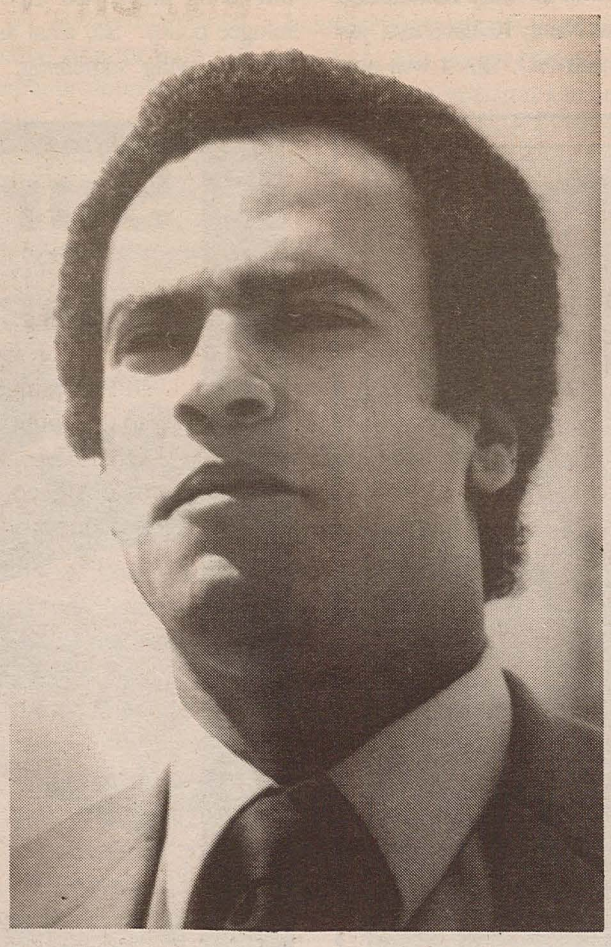
6. WE WANT COMPLETELY FREE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL BLACK AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE. We believe that the government must provide, free of charge, for the people, health facilities that will not only treat our illnesses, most of which have come about because of our oppression, but will also develop preventive medical programs to guarantee our future survival. We believe that mass health education and research programs must be developed to give all Black and oppressed people access to advanced scientific and medical information, so we may provide ourselves with proper medical attention and care.

7. WE WANT AN IMMEDIATE END TO POLICE BRUTALITY AND MURDER OF BLACK PEOPLE, OTHER PEOPLE OF COLOR, ALL OPPRESSED PEOPLE INSIDE THE UNITED STATES. We believe that the racist and fascist government of the United States uses its domestic enforcement agencies to carry out its program of oppression against Black people, other people of color, and poor people inside the United States. We believe it's our right, therefore, to defend ourselves against such armed forces and that all Black and oppressed people should be armed for self-defense of our homes and communities against these fascist police forces.

8. WE WANT AN IMMEDIATE END TO ALL WARS OF AGGRESSION. We believe that the various conflicts that exist around the world stem directly from the aggressive desires of the U.S. ruling circle and government to force its domination upon the oppressed people of the world. We believe that if the U.S. government or its lackeys do not cease these aggressive wars that it is the right of the people to defend themselves by any means necessary against their aggressors.

9. WE WANT FREEDOM FOR ALL BLACK AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE NOW HELD IN U.S. FEDERAL, STATE, COUNTY, CITY, AND MILITARY PRISONS AND JAILS. WE WANT TRIALS BY A JURY OF PEERS FOR ALL PERSONS CHARGED WITH SO-CALLED CRIMES UNDER THE LAWS OF THIS COUNTRY. We believe that the many Black and poor oppressed people now held in U.S. prisons and jails have not received fair and impartial trials under a racist and fascist judicial system and should be free from incarceration. We believe in the ultimate elimination of all wretched, inhuman penal institutions, because the masses of men and women imprisoned inside the United States or by the U.S. military are the victims of oppressive conditions that are the real cause of their imprisonment. We believe that when persons are brought to trial that they must be guaranteed, by the United States, juries of their peers, attorneys of their choice and freedom from imprisonment while awaiting trials.

10. WE WANT LAND, BREAD, HOUSING, EDUCATION, CLOTHING, JUSTICE, PEACE AND PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY CONTROL OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY. When, during human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands that have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But, when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.



Black Panther Founder, Dr. Huey P. Newton

Cuts in Bus Services

Continued from page 1

dicted to cost low income working families their jobs, increase crime, put more cars on the road, and increase what has become a two-tier transit system. The bus service cuts in Oakland and L.A. are predicted to fall hardest on working-class and poor and oppressed communities.

Two-Tier Bus System

"Commuters to the San Francisco financial district will be able to continue leaving their cars in their garages and take the AC Transit commuter runs, but their less well-connected neighbors will not be unable to take the bus to their night or weekend jobs. "The villain here, of course, is not simply the local transit district, " said Joe Bryak, cab and bus driver. Somebody, somewhere, has to be held accountable to the needs of the people,

and Two-thirds of its (AC transit) operating budget comes from the state and federal government and both have been cutting subsidies to public transportations and shifting funds away for city buses to more profitable lines of transport like light rail commuter trains for serving suburban residents who want to get into the city."

A "substandard, dirty, unsafe, slow and smelly" bus system serves low-income residents and people of color, while a comfortable, air-conditioned, cushion-carpeted MetroLink rail system serves the middle-class commuters from the city's outlaying areas."

Los Angeles bus riders are refusing to accept cuts in city bus services. In 1994 a group of frustrated mass transit users from the low income communities of Los Angeles and others, formed the Bus Riders Union (BRU) It consists of members of Los Angeles residents, and serves as a vocal response to the public transportation class bias in those urban areas. According to Lisa Duran, a political activist from the Labor/Community Strategy Center (LCSC), which sponsors the BRU, poor quality public transportation is reserved for poor people. A "substandard, dirty, unsafe, slow and smelly" bus system serves low-income residents and people of color, while a comfortable, air-conditioned, cushion-carpeted MetroLink rail system serves the middle-class commuters from the city's outlaying areas. In addition, this "middle class" rail system gets most of the money budgeted for public transportation. " Although the bus is serving 94 percent of the people who ride mass transit, " said Ms. Duran, "while rail serves 6 percent, the rail is receiving 79 percent of the MTA's [Metropolitan Transportation Agency] budget."

Della Bonner, a resident of theWatts area in Los Angeles, a predominately African-American, low-income area and a member of BRU's Planning Committee criticizes cuts made to public transportation services. According to her, new cuts make commuting more dangerous for people who work or need to go places at night. "Before they did the cuts, I could take a bus that came within four blocks of my house," she said. "Now I have a half-hour increase in riding time. I've gone from a walk of four blocks to a walk of 10 blocks. You're talking about 10 or 11 o'clock at night," she exclaimed.

Racial Discrimination Charged

Labor/Community strategy Center, which provided assistance to residents who formed BRU, has charged the city of Los Angeles with racial discrimination for their bias towards the light rail system mostly traveled by suburban whites, versus the minority traveled city bus system. Bonner, sums up the issue succinctly. She states, the move to reduce inner city public transportation services is "strictly for profits for the few."

Public transportation has historically been subsidized by the federal government in response to the demands of an organized community, with its own economic and political leadership, tired of being held hostage by privately owned transportation services, i.e., trains, coaches, and taxis. Now with the growing economic trend nationwide toward privatization of government and social services, from the postal service to prisons to in-home care for the elderly. Those subsidies are being taken away and private ownership of transportation resources is returning.

"The answer to this problem is re-organization of the community, *as* a community in the spirit of the Black Panther Intercommunal survival programs, led by Dr. Huey P. Newton," said Raymond Joe, former Black Panther Party Member. "Through rebuilding our collective economic strength and political leadership we can deliver a new demand for access to a clean, safe, state of the art public transportation system accessible and affordable to all."

Transit Scandal of '47

Before World War I, Harry Chandler, director of the Southern California Automobile Club and publisher of the Los Angeles Times, was a key figure in the modern revolution of the automobile. As a member of the board of directors of Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, and with controlling interests in Western Construction Company, Southern California Rock and Gravel Company, Consolidated Rock Products Company, and Royal Dutch Shell, Mr. Chandler was fast on the track to making the auto "king of Southern California."

Soon after California became a major automobile state, Southern Pacific Railway moved away from passenger service to higher profit, freight transportation. Public transportation was on the decline.

In 1936, General Motors, Standard Oil of California, Firestone Tire and Rubber, B.F. Phillip Petroleum, and Mack Manufacturing, organized National City Lines (NCL). NCL existed solely to convert city electric and trolley busses to motorized busses. To do so, NCL purchased needed materials from its parent companies.

In 1938, NCL formed Pacific City Lines (PCL), which purchased Los Angeles railway lines and converted electric and trolley cars to busses. By intentionally reducing service and maintenance of public transportation systems, the NCL-General Motors Consortium soon convinced inner-city passengers to prefer the "safer" diesel busses over noisy, dangerous electric street cars and trolleys. Eventually, the personal automobile became the transportation of choice.

In 1947, the United States Justice Department brought conspiracy charges against NCL-General Motors for violation of anti-trust laws.

Oakland Bay Area loses Key System to the gasoline engine

In 1939, Bay Area dwellers enjoyed inexpensive, pollution-free public transportation. Inter-urban electric trains, the Key System, and the Sacramento Norther were all built to serve Bay Area residents. In 1945, the Key System served 37,334,000 commuters. After the war, however, the auto industry boomed and the number of public transportation users dropped nearly 75% down to 6,113,000. The result was inevitable: In 1958 the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission abandoned its rail line, opting for the motor vehicle. The Toll Bridge Authority, in its meeting of December 1956, passed a motion to provide tax funded financing for the reconstruction of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, anticipating the abandonment of the rail service, and eventually, abandonment of San Francisco and Alameda county tax-payers.

In the 1950s, when the upper tier of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay bridge was being planned, the lower deck provided a pollution-free electrical railway system that accommodated urban dwellers. Eventually, the railway system was debunked and it went the way of the dinosaur. The booming auto industry was now the new kid on the block.

Real change

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dealt with (discredited and dismantled), there might actually be a united call from all the oppressed communities for the type of revolutionary intercommunalism that Dr. Huey P. Newton was advocating.

On the one hand, J. Edgar Hoover declared the BPP the single, most dangerous threat to the country, and on the other hand Richard M. Nixon putting forth programs designed that actually seem to address the problems Blacks were facing in employment and education.

One must understand that the motivation for Mr. Nixon was not the plight of blacks in this country, rather the intent was to forestall any chance of a united front of the oppressed. It was better to give the blacks a toehold that could later be withdrawn or manipulated, than to run the risk of having to capitulate to the demands of all the oppressed communities, as the BPP advocated.

So the FBI ran a clandestine disinformation program on the BPP, while the Nixon administration appeared to create programs designed to advance economic, and educational opportunities for the black community that had endured so much pastdiscrimination.

The BPP recognized this tactic for what it was, a purely divisive measure. The government gave something to one oppressed community and not to all. This led to a scrambling by those left out to get something for themselves. No longer threatened by the united front that the BPP called for, affirmative action soon became a catch-all for all manner of diverse fronts.

There were measures to prevent discrimination against women. Later other minorities found some measure of relief. Then the handicapped. Then gays, and on, and on the measures went in piecemeal fashion rather than in the comprehensive approach called for by the BPP.

With jobs and business on the decline, it is no wonder that those in command are attempting to direct where the bribes should be removed FROM, by ruling OUT affirmative action.

The only way we can all make it is if we organize our communities around the problems of the lowest income worker, the weakest, the least able. We have to all make sure that they don't fall between the cracks. Since they are the most defenseless, if we don't safeguard them, then we all won't make it, and we all must.

If we build sufficient strength in the communities of our nation to ensure they are taken care of, then we will all be secure — and that is the only way. Once that is done, we are position to see that a base is placed in the economy below which no one can fall, and that entails setting the price of the sweat of our brow, which means the other side is no longer setting it.

"Freedom" has always been given to us, allotted to us, and offered to us. But I think what the repeal of affirmative action shows is what Huey Newton knew all the time, that if a man gives you your freedom—you are not free because he maintains the power to take it back. Freedom is something you and you alone must take.

They can have affirmative action—it was never ours to keep in the first place. The true fight for freedom and equality is still being fought.

Power to the people!

Haiti

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this is what happened when the U.S. troops first landed in Haiti. They were under orders to collaborate with the Haitian military and you could have seen that on CNN. You could see that many people were being killed by the Haitian military in front of the US soldiers. And the U.S. soldiers stood at attention, not doing anything! Imagine?...grown men with an M-16 standing back and seeing murderers! beating up on women! beating up on children!.on men, unarmed!

He has an M-16 and he's beating them and killing them and hacking at them with bayonets and you're standing there watching this thing happening and you have a gun and you are not putting a stop to it?!?!....and you were sent there to defend human rights so many of those soldiers, like my nephew are also young brothers and sisters from our homes, from our communities. So they were outraged! Because when I saw that on CNN and they were interviewed and they expressed their outrage so the Pentagon and the Clinton administration had a problem. Then you have the people of Haiti saying "Hell no, we are not going to stay home we are going to take to the streets!" and they forced the issue and they exposed the hypocrisy and this is what caused the policy to change 'cause there was a major problem there. So this is the situation or what has happened since the presence of the troops in Haiti.

But also another bigger problem that is different is that you have the more special forces, many of them are following the political agenda, that the people's movement is not really what they want to support. Some of them are supporting the FRAPH, which is a para-military death squad in Haiti. It means Front for the Revolutionary Advancement of the Haitian People. (The nerve of them to call it revolutionary.)

COMMEMORATOR: Is FRAPH really a front for the Haitian military?

LABOSSIERE: No, but they are death squads and they do work hand in hand with the military so some of the special forces, you know, who are more political in their training, in their education. They express support for the military and see the lavalas government (Father Aristide party) as the enemy. So we've had in a number of cities in Haiti and a number of towns some actions that some of the U.S. special forces have taken that have been very anti-popular movement and people have taken to the streets and protested against them, so this is the current situation right now.

Since President Aristide's return to Haiti, the Haitian people have turned out in masses at recent election in Port-au-Prince, where Aristide's party, Lavalas, won 75-80 % of the vote.

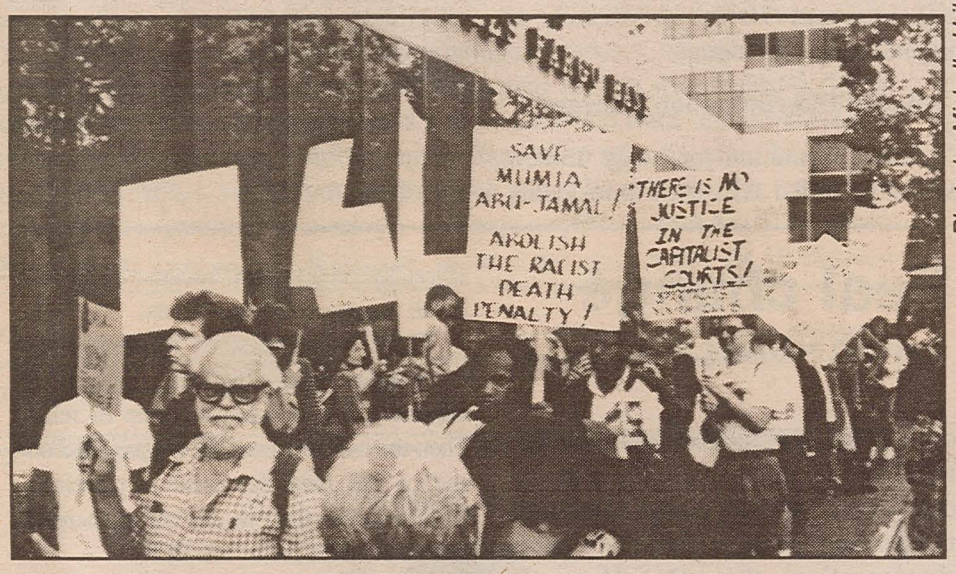

Photo by Michelle Uribe

The fight to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal is a fight against the criminal justice system—a racial, class and bias status-quo, which is designed against poor and working class people, while serving the rich and wealthy class.

The Truth

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can make a real difference, if you will only get involved!!

My Dad, who is 70+ years old, and who lives in Pittsburgh, PA, never in his entire life did anything to put and end to the death penalty, even though he grew up during a time when Black men were lynched on a regular basis. He, like you, was more concerned and involved with his own life and affairs. That was until I, his son, received the death penalty. Now my 70-year-old Dad is a soldier in this fight against the death penalty, whether it be on the East Coast, or the West Coast, or anywhere in the world. If he can do it, so can you!

So if you are a mentally, emotionally, spiritually and physiologically strong brother or sister, you are needed by me, and other brothers and sisters, who are in my situation, and I ask you to please get involved because our lives depend on your help. One person can make a difference, but you must be for real, just as for real as the state is about killing!!

Please feel free to write to me, and I will do all I can to get you involved in this fight for life!

Mr. Kevin Cooper
P.O. Box C-65304
San Quentin State Prison
San Quentin, CA 94974

COMMEMORATOR: Could you speak to the drug factor in Haiti?

There is the drug factor. This is something used by the generals to make profits and undermine the peoples movements. The drug question is big business in Haiti; it's a global operation controlled by the military. In the late 1970s crack became popular. Haitian military became deeply involved in drug trade and they have fled the country with millions. So far our movement has managed to resist the drug problem and shield the young people. But tafia, cheap rum, was passed around during election time.

COMMEMORATOR: Is Aristide planning to run again? Does he see a way to solve some of the problems? Do you see this as a recurring problem with the military now that the US is there?

LABOSSIERE: Let me finish one point that you brought up here that reminded me of something. In the mean time there is the military in Haiti that has been abolished by Father Aristide—no more! The Haitian military no longer exists in Haiti. And secondly what has happened is that the headquarters of the Haitian military, you remember seeing Cedras [the coup leader who in 1991 overthrew the popular elected government of Father Aristide] waving to his thugs down there, which is the equivalent of the Pentagon in the US, right? Father Aristide has decommissioned it and turned it over to a newly created Ministry for Women's Affairs, so this is a very powerful event in Haiti. I visited that building and I have met with the Minister of Women's Affairs. It was beautiful; the whole delegation met with her. In the meantime there was a interim police force that is being trained in Haiti, the right way hopefully and to take over. It would only be a police force existing in Haiti and no more military and that is why we have to fight the Clinton administration proposal, which wants to train them here and raise their number to 7,000. Right now there are only supposed to be 3,000. This was the old strength of the Haitian military. Now training where, at the School of the Americas?...which is a school for assassins. Right now there is a movement to stop that school and do away with it. This is a school that has given rise to many death squad leaders in Central America and in Haiti.

Many of the leaders were trained at that school, military leaders.

In February former president Jimmy Carter, former Joint Chief of Staff, Colin Powell, and senator Sam Nunn visited Haiti and advocated safeguarding Cedras and his generals. Carter embraced Cedras who left Haiti and is now in Panama. Carter asked Aristide not to support his own candidates, the Lavalas party. Carter do not want the Lavalas candidate to participate in the upcoming election of this month, so that the death squad, FRAPH, can win, which is tied to Cedras and his generals. Haitians don't forget. Cedras inherited the Duvialierists military and his paramilitary, ton ton macoute. (In 1957 Papa Doc with the army and the macoutes destroyed elections) So, I wanted to close that chapter on the military part.

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